

# Measles

Measles (Rubeola) is a highly **contagious respiratory infection** caused by a virus. It occurs mostly in the late winter and spring. The recent occurrence of Measles in Florida and across the nation has produced over one hundred confirmed cases in the first month of 2015. The CDC reported over 600 cases occurred in the United States during 2014. There have been confirmed cases of measles in both Pennsylvania and New York in January. As of February 2, 2015, there has been no confirmed case of Measles in New Jersey.

The **symptoms** of Measles start with a high fever and fatigue that lasts for a couple of days. Other symptoms can be a cough, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, a hacking cough and/or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The lymph nodes of the neck may swell. Early in the course of measles Koplik spots, small white spots (often on a reddened background) may occur on the inside of the cheeks. The measles body rash starts on the face and upper neck, spreads down the back and trunk, then extends to the arms and hands, as well as the legs and feet. After about 5 days, the rash fades in the same order in which it appeared.

Measles are **spread** by droplets from breathing, sneezing or coughing and can survive in the air or on a surface for up to 2 hours. The virus can be spread to others 2-4 days before symptoms appear. The incubation period of measles from exposure to first symptoms averages 10-12 days with the rash appearing 7-18 days after exposure.

The best protection for **preventing** measles is receiving the **MMR vaccine**. The vaccine is administered at age 12-15 months, with a second dose at 4-6 years of age. More than 95% of those who receive a single dose of measles vaccine will develop immunity. A second dose gives immunity to almost all of those who did not respond to the first dose. Almost everyone who has **NOT had the MMR shot will get measles** if they are exposed to the measles virus.

Note: all of the above information is directly from various sections of the CDC web site.

**General Prevention for viral infections** includes, hand washing, sneezing or coughing into your elbow area and cleaning of surfaces can help control the spread of any virus. If your child is ill, has a cough, fever or rash do not send them to school. Notify the school nurse if your child develops Measles or if you need further information.

For further information visit the CDC's web site:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/fs-parents.html> or

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/downloads/PL-dis-measles-color-office.pdf>

