



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious disease that produces a red blotchy rash. The rash typically begins around the hairline or near the ears and spreads downward.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Some or all of the following symptoms can be seen in those infected:

- High fever
- Cough
- Red or watery eyes
- Runny nose
- Koplik spots in mouth (tiny white spots with blue- white centers over red skin found in mouth and inside cheeks)
- Rash with large flat blotches
 - The rash appears red on lighter skin tones or purplish on darker skin tones

How is measles spread?

- The virus can remain in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after an infected person leaves the area. If someone breathes in the contaminated air or touches an infected surface and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth, they can become infected.

How contagious is measles?

- Up to 90% of people without immunity from a vaccine or prior infection, may become sick if they come into contact with an infected person.
- Measles is extremely contagious. One person can infect up to 18 others, and those 18 can infect 18 more. This is how outbreaks happen and can spread quickly.

How is measles diagnosed?

- Measles is diagnosed by a health care provider. It can usually be diagnosed based on the characteristic rash.
- Health care providers may ask questions about immunization status or recent travel.
- Measles can also be confirmed through a nasal swab.

How is measles treated?

- Once someone has been infected with measles, treatment requires symptom management.
- Symptom management may include rest and drinking fluids.

How can I limit the spread of measles?

- Vaccination is the only protection against measles. The vaccine is 99.7% effective.
- Verify your immunization status to ensure you are fully protected. Those born before 1958 are considered to have presumed immunity to measles due to being exposed during childhood.

Individuals who were immunized between 1963 and 1967 should discuss receiving an additional dose with their health care provider.

- It is important to get tested if symptoms appear after an exposure to confirm a measles infection.
- Stay home if you get sick.
- Stay away from others while infected with the measles.
- Wash hands frequently and cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing.

Why is measles a serious disease?

- Measles can cause a high fever, sensitivity to light, dehydration, cough, pneumonia, and a rash.
- Children who are hospitalized may need fluids, supportive care, and sometimes a ventilator to breathe.
- In severe cases, measles can cause brain damage, seizures, deafness, blindness, and even death. It can also weaken the immune system, leading to problems years later.

Where can I get a vaccine?

- Contact your healthcare provider.
- If you are uninsured or underinsured, visit the Erie County Health Department at <https://eriecountypa.gov/departments/health/> or call **814-451-6700**.

Resources:

Erie County Department of Health: <https://eriecountypa.gov/departments/health/health-now/measels/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Measles Vaccination | Measles \(Rubeola\) | CDC](#)