



# Measles: symptoms, diagnosis and prevention

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Measles is a contagious disease caused by a measles virus. The small white spots known as Koplik's spots may form in the mouth two or three days after the onset of symptoms. A rash usually begins on the face and then spreads throughout the body which usually begins three to five days after the onset of symptoms. Common problems include diarrhea, middle ear disease, and pneumonia. Abnormal fainting, blindness, or inflammation of the brain may occur. Both rubella, also known as German measles, and roseola are various infections caused by unrelated germs. Measles is a highly contagious airborne disease that spreads from person to person through coughing and sneezing of infected people. It can also be transmitted by direct contact with the mouth or nasal passages. Extremely contagious: nine out of ten people who are unprotected and who share a living with an infected person will become infected. Although commonly referred to as childhood disease, it can affect people of any age. Most people do not get this disease more than once. Testing for measles in suspected cases is essential to public health efforts. Once a person is infected, no specific treatment is available, although supportive care may improve outcomes. Such care may include oral rehydration solution, a healthy diet, and flu-control medication. Antibiotics should be discontinued if secondary bacterial infections such as ear infections or pneumonia occur. The majority of those who die from the disease are under the age of five. It begins behind the ears and, within a few hours, spreads to the head and neck before spreading to cover most of the body, often causing itching. The outbreak of measles appears two to four days after the first symptoms and lasts up to eight days. People who have been vaccinated against measles but do not have adequate immune systems may

experience a modified form of measles. Converted measles is characterized by having a long incubation period, mild and very small symptoms. Measles problems are relatively common, ranging from mild to severe such as diarrhea to more serious ones such as bacterial pneumonia or bacterial pneumonia, laryngotracheobronchitis, severe brain inflammation and leading to corneal scar. In addition, measles can suppress the immune system for weeks to months, and this can contribute to infections such as otitis media and bacterial pneumonia. It stays infected for up to two hours in the air or in nearby areas. Only humans are infected with the virus, and no other animal dams are known to exist, although mountain gorillas are believed to be infected. A laboratory measles test can be performed by confirming IgM measles antibodies or the detection of RNA measles virus in the throat, nose or urine sample using a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction assay. This method is very useful in confirming situations where IgM antibody effects do not coincide. The saliva test used to diagnose measles involves collecting a saliva sample and testing for the presence of antibodies against measles. Mothers who have been vaccinated against measles transmit antibodies to their babies while they are still in the womb, especially if the mother has acquired antibodies through infection rather than immunization. Such antibodies will usually give newborns some protection against measles, but these antibodies are gradually lost during the first nine months of life.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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