

# Measles (Red Measles, Rubeola)

## What is Measles?

- Measles is caused by a virus.
- Measles can be very serious. It can cause ear infections, pneumonia and brain infections.
- Measles tends to be more severe in adults and very young children. It can affect all ages.
- Due to immunization, cases of Measles are now rare but cases and outbreaks still occur.
- **Anyone who thinks they may have Measles should see their doctor and have a blood test to confirm the diagnosis.**

## What signs and symptoms can you have?

- Children with Measles usually have a high fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes and spots in their mouth. After a few days a rash appears.
- The rash starts on the face as a few red spots. The rash worsens and spreads to cover the body. The rash may last up to 7 days.
- People who have been immunized against Measles can still get Measles but should have milder symptoms.
- In Saskatchewan, most cases initially diagnosed by a doctor as Measles turn out to be something else when blood tests are done.

## Quick Facts

- Measles is highly contagious.
- Measles can be very serious.
- Immunization has made Measles a rare disease.
- Anyone who thinks they may have Measles should see their doctor.

## How is Measles spread?

- Measles is spread by touching hands, objects and surfaces contaminated with droplets from the nose and mouth of a person who carries the bacteria. This can happen with coughing and sneezing. It spreads easily between people through the air.
- Measles is highly contagious.
- **People can spread the virus to others from 1 or 2 days before they have any symptoms until 4 days after the rash appears.**
- Following Measles immunization a rash can occur in 7-12 days. It is not contagious.

## How do you treat Measles?

- There is no specific treatment.
- Symptoms including fever can be treated with acetaminophen (e.g. Tempra™, Tylenol™).

**IMPORTANT:** DO NOT give children and adolescents ASA (Aspirin™, acetylsalicylic acid) as it has been related to severe illness when given to children with viral infections. Treat fever with acetaminophen products such as Tylenol™, Tempra™ or other brands.

## How can you prevent the spread of Measles?

- **Someone with Measles must not go to school, daycare or out in public until at least 4 days after the rash begins.**

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- The single most important way to prevent Measles is to be immunized with the Measles vaccine.
- If Measles occurs in a school or daycare, children who are not immunized must be kept at home until they are immunized or until 2 weeks after the last case of Measles.
- Immunization for Measles (MMR) is offered routinely in 2 doses. The first is given at 12 months of age. The second will be given at 18 months of age.
- If you think you have been exposed to Measles see a doctor.
- Infants, pregnant women and immunocompromised people who have been exposed to Measles may be able to receive some protection through immunization. Doctors can discuss this with Population and Public Health Services.

**To report a communicable disease contact Population and Public Health Services at 766-7790.**

**For general information regarding a communicable disease contact the Provincial HealthLine at the toll-free number below.**

***HealthLine***  
***1-877-800-0002***