



DISEASE PREVENTION

Measles

What is measles?

Measles is a virus that infects the lungs and breathing passages like the nose, mouth, and throat, and spreads throughout the body.

How is measles spread?

The virus spreads easily by sharing the same air with an infected person, especially if that person breathes, coughs or sneezes.

How contagious is measles?

Measles is the most contagious respiratory illness. In a room 10 non-immunized people, measles will infect 9 people.

Someone who is infected can spread the disease to other people before noticing any symptoms, especially in the four days before and after a rash develops.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Typical first symptoms of a measles infection include:



High Fever



Runny Nose



Red, Watery Eyes



Cough

After three to five days, a rash starts on the face and spreads to other parts of the body.



There is no treatment for measles, but you can take actions to manage symptoms and prevent complications. Vitamin A can help a child who is very sick, but it does NOT prevent measles. Although rare, measles can lead to very serious complications such as pneumonia, brain swelling, and even death.

If you experience symptoms, stay at home and call your doctor

If you have symptoms of measles, call your healthcare provider's office. They will give you special instructions to avoid getting healthcare providers and others sick if you need to seek medical care.



Preventing measles in your family



The best way to protect against measles is with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Getting the MMR vaccine is much safer than getting sick with measles.

Two doses of MMR vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles and protection is long-lasting.

Immunization against measles



Adults who have received two documented doses of the MMR vaccine do not need to receive additional doses.

Children are recommended to get the MMR vaccine at one year and four years of age.

It is especially important that high-risk adults, such as healthcare professionals, college students, people with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection, or those preparing for international travel, confirm they've previously received two doses to be fully protected.

You can check measles immunization status by



- Speaking with your healthcare provider to make sure you're fully protected
- Sign up for MyIRmobile.com
- Calling WCPH at 509.397.6280 during normal business hours Monday-Friday

Finding the MMR vaccine



If you believe you need the MMR vaccine, please call your healthcare provider or local pharmacy.

If your healthcare provider or local pharmacy does not have the MMR vaccine or is unable to complete your request for vaccination in a timely manner, please contact Whitman County Public Health at (509) 397-6280. We can:

- Help you find where to get an MMR vaccine quickly somewhere in our community
- For all children and uninsured adults, WCPH's Whitman County Community Clinics – located in Pullman and Colfax – offer low-cost to no-cost vaccinations for MMR. We will walk you through how to get an appointment scheduled with us.

MODIFIED 5.2.2025

Information adapted from Washington State Department of Health (DOH)

