

# Measles

for the general population



## Overview

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

### Who it affects most:

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



## Symptoms

Typical first symptoms of measles include **fever, runny nose, red watery eyes, and cough**. After three to five days, a rash starts on the face and spreads to other parts of the body.

### Common symptoms:

- High fever
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Cough

### Severe symptoms:

- Pneumonia
- Brain swelling
- Death



## Transmission

Measles spreads easily by sharing the same air with an infected person, especially when that person breathes, coughs, or sneezes.

### How it spreads:

- **Airborne:** Sharing air with an infected person
- **Respiratory droplets:** Breathing, coughing, or sneezing



## Prevention

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.

### Hygiene practices

- Promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (cover coughs/sneezes and encourage patients/visitors to follow good respiratory hygiene).
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as fit-tested N95 respirators for healthcare personnel in high-risk areas.

### Environmental safety

- Minimize potential exposure by screening and rapidly isolating suspected measles cases upon arrival.
- Implement environmental infection control using standard cleaning and disinfection procedures.
- Patients with measles should be placed in isolation (ideally airborne infection isolation rooms) to limit spread.

# Measles

for those exposed to this illness



## I was exposed to measles.

Exposure means sharing air with a person infected with measles, especially if they are breathing, coughing, or sneezing.

### When Do Symptoms Show?

Someone who is infected can spread measles before noticing any symptoms, **especially in the four days before and after a rash develops.**

### When to seek medical care

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

## How is it treated?

There is no treatment for measles. Actions can be taken to manage symptoms and prevent complications. Vitamin A can help a child who is very sick, but it does not prevent measles.

## How do I stop the spread?

### How long can I spread Measles?

An infected person can spread measles before symptoms appear, particularly in the **four days before and after a rash develops.**

### How to do I stop spreading it to others?

- Stay home if you experience symptoms
- Call your healthcare provider before seeking care
- Follow instructions to avoid exposing others

## Contact Information

### Whitman County Public Health – Disease Prevention Division

- **Pullman:** 1205 SE Pro Mall Blvd #203, Pullman, WA 99163 – 509.332.6752
- **Colfax:** 310 N Main St #108, Colfax, WA 99111 – 509.397.6280

### When/How to contact WCPH:

Call during regular business hours for questions or guidance if exposed to rodents or diagnosed with Hantavirus.

For more information:

Visit [whitmancountypublichealth.org](http://whitmancountypublichealth.org)