

MEASLES FACT SHEET

Parents are kindly requested to keep their children out of school for minimum of 7 days after the rash develops.

What is measles?

Measles is a potentially serious respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) that causes a rash and fever. It is highly contagious.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles starts with a fever that can get very high. Some of the other symptoms that may occur are:

- Cough, runny nose, and red eyes
- Rash of tiny, red spots that start at the head and spread to the rest of the body
- Diarrhoea
- Ear infection

Is it serious?

Measles can be dangerous, especially for babies and young children.

For some children, the more common complications include diarrhoea, middle ear infection, and pneumonia.

It is important to note that more serious complications can develop while the body is trying to clear the infection.

Signs of a more serious problem can include:

- Shortness of breath
- A sharp chest pain that feels worse with breathing
- Coughing up blood
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Convulsions (fits)

If your child develops any of these symptoms, seek immediate medical help, as it may be a sign of a serious bacterial infection requiring possible admission to hospital and treatment with antibiotics.

How does measles spread?

Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes. It is very contagious. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, up to 2 hours after that person is gone. Measles can be caught from an infected person even before they have a measles rash. Good hygiene including proper hand washing can help prevent the spread of the virus.

How is measles treated?

There is no specific treatment for measles, but the condition usually improves without treatment within seven to ten days. The self-care techniques listed below may help.

- Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be used to reduce a high temperature (fever) and treat any aches or pains.
- If your child's high temperature is causing them distress, you can also try to reduce it by keeping them cool. A cool (but not cold) compress, such as a damp flannel held to their forehead, can help.
- If your child has a high temperature, make sure they drink plenty of fluid because they may be at risk of dehydration. Keeping hydrated will also help reduce discomfort caused by coughing.
- Treat cold-like symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or a cough with steam inhalation by putting child in sit in a hot, steamy bathroom Giving your child warm drinks, particularly ones containing lemon or honey, may also help to relax their airways, loosen mucus and soothe a cough.
- Treat sore eyes by gently cleaning away any crustiness from eyelids and lashes using cotton wool soaked in water. Closing curtains or dimming lights can help reduce any light sensitivity.

If your symptoms don't improve after ten days, or suddenly worsen, contact a doctor for advice.