



## METROPOLITAN HEALTH DISTRICT

### Measles Frequently Asked Questions

#### General

- What is measles?
  - Measles is a highly contagious and potentially severe rash illness caused by a virus. The virus is passed from an individual with measles via the air we breathe.
- What are the signs and symptoms of measles?
  - Measles symptoms appear 7 to 14 days after exposure and include:
    - High fever (can be higher than 104°F)
    - Cough
    - Runny nose (coryza)
    - Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
    - Tiny white spots that may appear inside the mouth 2-3 days after symptoms begin
    - Rash
- Do you always get a rash?
  - There is a possibility that the symptoms for measles present differently in some people, particularly if they are vaccinated. The rash may be less prominent or may not appear at all.
- What are the complications caused by measles?
  - Measles can cause complications, especially in children younger than 5 years of age. Common complications are ear infections and diarrhea. Serious complications include pneumonia and encephalitis.
- What can I do to protect myself?
  - Vaccination with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine is the best way to prevent measles. One dose generally provides 93% protection, while 2 doses provides about 97% protection from measles infection.

#### Vaccines and Vaccine Records

- What vaccine protects against measles?
  - Measles can be prevented with a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR or MMRV). The MMR vaccine protects against three diseases: measles, mumps and rubella. The MMRV vaccine protects against four diseases: measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).
- Who should get the MMR or MMRV vaccine?
  - MMR vaccination is available for children (12 months of age and older) as well as adults who do not have evidence of immunity.
    - Children Require two vaccines to be fully immunized.
      - The first dose is administered at 12-15 months of age.
      - The second dose is administered at 4-6 years of age.
    - Most adults with no evidence of immunity should receive 1 dose. Adults should speak with their healthcare provider to determine if a second dose is appropriate for them.

- MMRV vaccination is licensed for use in children 12 months to 12 years of age.
- Anyone 12 months of age or older should get the vaccine if one of the following is not met:
  - Have written documentation of vaccination with measles virus-containing vaccine; OR
  - Have laboratory evidence of immunity; OR
  - Have laboratory confirmation of disease; OR
  - Born before 1957.
- Do I need an MMR vaccine if I had a inactivated (killed) vaccine?
  - People who were vaccinated prior to 1968 with either inactivated (killed) measles vaccine or measles vaccine of unknown type should be revaccinated with at least one dose of live attenuated measles vaccine. The current MMR vaccine is a live attenuated vaccine.
- What do I do if I do not remember if I got a measles vaccine?
  - You should get an MMR vaccine if you do not have one of the following as proof of immunity for measles:
    - Written documentation of adequate vaccination in your immunization record,
    - Laboratory evidence of immunity is obtained when a healthcare provider tests your blood to determine if you are immune, but this is generally not recommended.
    - Laboratory confirmation of disease, or
    - Birth before 1957. Before vaccines were available, nearly everyone was infected with measles during childhood. Most people born before 1957 are likely to have been infected naturally and therefore are presumed to be protected against measles.
- Can I get the MMR vaccine if I am pregnant?
  - No, if you are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant within the next month, you should not be vaccinated until after delivery.
- How long does it take to develop protection against measles after receiving the vaccine?
  - It takes about 2 weeks after vaccination to develop protection against measles.
- Where can I get a vaccine for measles?
  - If insured, most health insurances cover the cost of the MMR and MMRV vaccine. Insured persons should check with their doctor or local pharmacy to see what vaccines are offered.
  - If uninsured, you can get an MMR vaccine at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) or at Metro Health.
    - [Find an FQHC near you.](#)
    - Make an appointment at the Metro Health Immunization Clinic by calling 210-207-8790 from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
    - Visit a [Metro Health Pop-Up Clinic](#) where vaccines are offered on a first-come first-served basis.
- Where can I get my vaccination record?
  - Your healthcare provider, child's school, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Metro Health may be able to provide immunization records. [You can find details on each option here.](#)

### Exposure

- What should I do if I am exposed?
  - Monitor for symptoms for 21 days after exposure.
  - If unvaccinated, getting the MMR vaccine can prevent developing measles or complications due to measles.
- What should I do if I develop symptoms?
  - If symptoms appear:
    - stay home

- avoid school, work, and large gatherings
- call a healthcare provider right away
- do not enter a healthcare facility without first calling them about your measles exposure and symptoms so you do not expose other patients.
- Where can I get tested if I'm symptomatic?
  - Testing for measles is available through your healthcare provider or urgent care. If uninsured, you can follow up with a [Federally Qualified Health Center \(FQHC\)](#). Do not enter a healthcare facility without first calling them about possibly having measles so you do not expose other patients.
- Can I still get measles even if I have the vaccine?
  - While the MMR vaccine is very effective, it is still possible to get measles even if you have the vaccine. The illness is typically less severe in individuals who have the vaccine and still get infected.
- If I am vaccinated against measles and still develop illness, can I still pass the virus to others?
  - Yes, if you develop measles, you can pass the virus to others even if vaccinated.

#### Healthcare Provider

- I'm a healthcare provider, where can I report a case of measles?
  - See the reporting instructions on the Metro Health [Reportable Diseases and Epidemiology](#) site.

#### For More Information

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\)](#)