

Measles

Measles is caused by a virus and was once a common disease among children in the United States.

Since the measles vaccine became available in the United States in the 1960s, cases of measles have decreased by about 99%. Measles is still common in many countries, and outbreaks still occur. In recent years, there have been increased numbers of cases of measles in the United States. Experts think that measles cases have increased because of travel outside the country; some cases of measles have come to the United States from countries including England, Germany, India, and the Philippines. Another likely cause is people who are not vaccinated are spreading measles in the United States. This issue of *JAMA Pediatrics* describes how 58 cases of measles in unvaccinated children in 2013 led to almost \$400 000 in costs to control this outbreak.

Measles is a respiratory virus that causes symptoms such as cough, runny nose, and fever. Symptoms also include conjunctivitis, which is sometimes called pinkeye. Some children with measles develop diarrhea or an ear infection. After a child with measles has been ill for 2 to 3 days, a rash usually appears. The rash begins on the face and spreads across the skin downward toward the legs. The rash can last for more than a week before it goes away.

Measles can be dangerous, especially for babies and young children. Negative consequences of measles can include pneumonia (a serious lung infection), brain damage, deafness, or even death. Between 2001 and 2013, 28% of children younger than 5 years who had measles needed to be treated in the hospital.

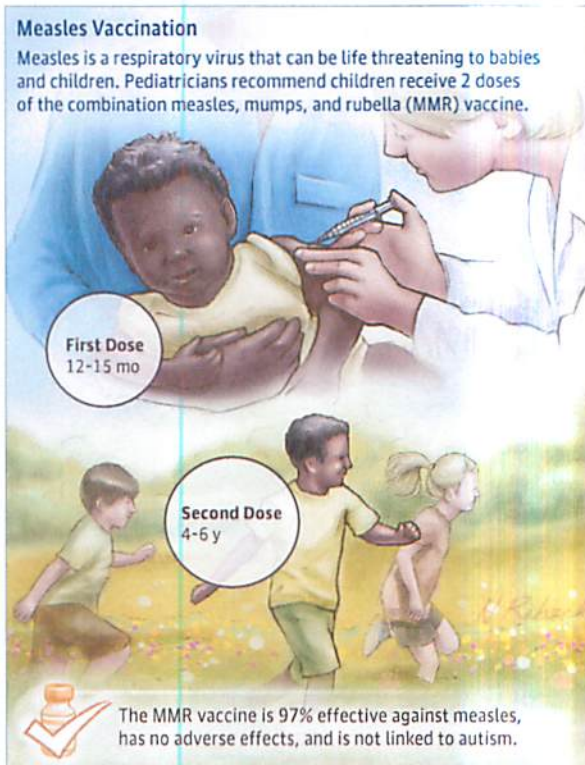
If you are concerned that your child may have measles, keep him or her home from school or daycare. Measles is very contagious. In particular, keep him or her away from any children who have not had a measles vaccine. You can provide your child supportive care such as fluids, rest, and over-the-counter medicine for fever. Call your pediatrician and discuss your concern; your pediatrician may want to be careful with how or when to see your child so that he or she does not expose other children to the measles virus.

Parents can prevent measles by providing their children with the measles vaccine. The measles vaccine comes as a combination vaccine called MMR. The MMR vaccine includes protection for measles, mumps, and rubella. Pediatricians recommend that all children receive 2 MMR shots, which provides 97% effective protection against measles. Once your child has had those 2 shots,

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there is no need for booster doses in the future. Most children who get the MMR vaccine have no negative adverse effects. There have been many scientific studies of the MMR vaccine, and no studies have found a link between MMR vaccine and autism.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about how to protect your child from measles:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/>

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