

Measles

Fever and rash?.....Consider measles. Measles is an infection that occurs most often in late Winter and Spring. It begins with a fever that lasts for a few days and can spike as high as 105°F. This is followed by a cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis (pink eye) and a rash. Measles rashes are red, blotchy (maculopapular), and typically start on the hairline and face and then spread downwards to the rest of the body. The rash usually lasts about 5 days. Measles is highly contagious, usually 4 days before the rash starts and 4 days after, spread by an infected person coughing and sneezing droplets into the air. While measles itself is unpleasant, the complications are dangerous. According to the Center for Disease Control, 1 out of 1,000 people with measles develop an inflammation of the brain or death. The best way to protect against measles is to get the MMR vaccine and booster.

Here are some things to consider:

1. Talk to your doctor about the MMR vaccine for your child or for you if you do not already have immunity.
2. If you think you or your child may have measles, hand washing frequently using soap and warm water is important as the measles virus can remain live on contaminated surfaces for up to 2 hours.
3. Cover your mouth or nose when you cough or sneeze to protect others.
4. Have tissues handy and be sure to throw used tissues in the waste basket.
5. Eat balanced meals, drink lots of fluids.
6. Get plenty of rest and stay home from work or school if you are sick, as measles is highly contagious.

7. Ask your doctor about the MMR vaccine if you are planning travel outside the country and have not already been vaccinated.

8. If you have measles, contact your doctor if you have other medical conditions or prolonged symptoms or fever.

There are many over the counter (OTC) medications to treat cold or flu like symptoms and itching associated with measles. Always consult a doctor before considering OTC medication for a child under 2 years old or someone with an existing medical condition. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), children or teenagers who may have the flu like symptoms should **NOT** be given aspirin or medicines that contain aspirin.

For More Information about Measles:

County of Los Angeles, Public Health: 10 Things You Need to Know about Immunizations

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mmr.pdf>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Who Should be Vaccinated

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines>

National Network for Immunization Information

<http://www.immunizationinfo.org/vaccines/measles>

KEY POINTS

- Get immunized
- Use tissues when you cough or sneeze
- Consult a doctor before using OTC medications
- Get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids

