



## Measles (Red Measles, Rubeola)

### What is it?

Measles is a severe illness caused by a virus. It is often complicated by diarrhea, ear infection, croup (a condition resulting from an obstruction of the airways), pneumonia, or encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Measles can also cause death.

### What does it look like?

Symptoms occur about 10 days (but can be seven to 18 days) after a person has been exposed. First symptoms are a high fever, runny nose, cough, pink eye (inflammation of the eye) and Koplik spots (small bluish white spots inside the mouth). After about four days, a bright red, raised, blotchy rash appears. The rash starts on the face then spreads to the rest of the body and lasts for about a week. Measles is one of the most highly communicable infectious diseases.

### How is it spread?

Measles is an airborne disease that is spread by breathing droplets in the air that contain the measles virus. It can also be spread by direct contact with nose or throat secretions from an infected person. A person with measles is infectious from one to two days before the symptoms (fever, cough etc.) begin to four days after the appearance of the rash. There is no carrier state for measles. A person can only spread measles if they have the disease.

For prevention of measles, vaccination with MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) is recommended as soon as possible after the first birthday with a booster dose at age 18 months or before the child starts school.

### Recommended absence

Anyone in the infectious stage of measles must stay away from day care, school and work for at least four days after the appearance of the rash.

This disease must be reported to the Medical Officer of Health as required by the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

For more information, please contact a member of Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit's Communicable Disease Team.

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