GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

What to Do If You Have Been Exposed to Measles?

What is Measles?

- Measles (rubeola) is a very contagious respiratory disease caused by the measles virus.
- Measles typically begins with cold-like symptoms, including fever, cough, runny nose, and red watery eyes.
- Three to five days after symptoms begin, a rash breaks out. The rash begins as flat red spots at the hairline, moves to the face, and spreads down the body.
- Measles can cause serious health complications, especially in children younger than 5 years old.
- Anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles begins with a fever that lasts for a couple of days, followed by a cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis). These symptoms are followed a few days later by a rash that begins at the hairline, spreads to the face and upper neck, and then spreads down the body.

How was I exposed to Measles?

Measles spreads through contact with droplets that may carry the measles virus when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes. The measles virus can live for up to two hours on surfaces and in airspace. An individual can become exposed to measles by breathing contaminated air or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their nose, mouth, or eyes.

Am I protected against Measles?

Individuals (non-healthcare personnel) are protected against measles if they have **documentation** of one of the following:

- You received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, and you are a(n):
  - School-aged child (grades K-12)
  - Adult in a setting that poses a high risk for measles transmission, including students at post-high school educational institutions and international travelers
- You received one dose of measles-containing vaccine, and you are a(n)
  - Preschool-aged child
  - Adult who will not be in a high-risk setting for measles transmission
- Laboratory confirmation that you had measles at some point in your life
- Laboratory confirmation of measles immunity
- Born before 1957

For healthcare personnel, please refer to Measles in a Healthcare Setting document.

I have been exposed to someone with measles. What should I do?

Call your healthcare provider, tell them you have been exposed to someone who has measles, and ask them to help you check if you have protection against measles. If you become symptomatic, notify your provider of your symptoms and exposure **BEFORE** visiting any healthcare facility. You can also contact

the Department of Public Health Acute Disease Epidemiology Section at 404-657-2588 during business hours, Monday through Friday, or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) after hours and weekends.

If you're unsure whether you're protected against measles, try to find your vaccination records or documentation of measles immunity.
https://dph.georgia.gov/immunization-records-request
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/recommended-vaccines/keeping-vaccine-records-up-to-date.html

Your healthcare provider can:

- Determine if you are protected against measles based on your vaccination record, age, or laboratory evidence.
- Make special arrangements to evaluate you, if needed, without putting other patients and medical office staff at risk.

Can I receive a measles vaccination or medicine to protect against measles if I've been exposed (postexposure prophylaxis)?

People exposed to measles who cannot readily show adequate evidence of protection against measles should be offered post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Healthcare providers and public health officials can help identify eligible persons, assess contraindications, and weigh benefits.

Exposed individuals may be offered:

- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine or immunoglobulin. If there are no vaccine contraindications (such as pregnancy, immunocompromised, or less than 6 months of age), individuals may receive the MMR vaccine within 72 hours of exposure.
- Immunoglobulin (antibodies) can be provided to individuals under 6 months old, pregnant, or immunocompromised within 6 days from exposure.

Do I need to stay at home (quarantine)?

Individuals exposed to measles who are not protected against measles should stay home and away from others (quarantine) for 21 days after their last day of exposure. Postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) may be offered to exposed persons who cannot provide evidence of measles protection. PEP prevents or can help make the illness less severe when a person is exposed to measles.

Why do I have to do daily symptom checks/active monitoring?

If you are not fully protected against measles, Public Health will check in with you daily by email, text, or phone to ensure that you have not developed any measles symptoms and, if needed, help set up an appointment with a healthcare provider.

What do I do if I develop Measles symptoms?

If you develop measles symptoms, contact your local public health department or the Department of Public Health Acute Disease Epidemiology Section at 404-657-2588 during business hours, Monday through Friday, or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) after hours and weekends.

If you contact your healthcare provider, **notify them of your symptoms and exposure BEFORE visiting any healthcare facility to prevent further spread of the virus. If you go to a healthcare facility, call before walking in so they may safely bring you into the facility without exposing**

others. A healthcare provider will conduct laboratory testing to confirm the illness. Patients with a confirmed measles infection must be isolated from four days before rash onset through four days after rash onset.

What should I do if I think my child might have measles?

- Keep your child home if you think they have measles and contact public health and/ or your healthcare provider.
- Call ahead before going into the provider's office. This is so the office staff can keep your child separate from other patients to avoid spreading the illness.

How is measles diagnosed?

Healthcare providers diagnose measles by asking about symptoms and possible exposures. They also do laboratory tests of blood, urine, and samples from the mouth and throat to look for the measles virus.

Is there a treatment for measles?

There is no treatment for measles; there is just supportive care to help relieve symptoms, such as rest, drinking fluids, and controlling the fever.

Are there complications of measles?

- Some people with measles may have complications like diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, acute encephalitis (a brain infection that can lead to permanent brain damage), and death.
- Complications are more common in children under 5, adults over 20, and those with weakened immune systems.
- Measles during pregnancy increases the risk of premature labor, miscarriage, and low birth weight infants.
- If you notice symptoms of complications, contact your child's healthcare provider as soon as possible.

For more information about measles, please visit https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/acute-disease-epidemiology/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles or https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html