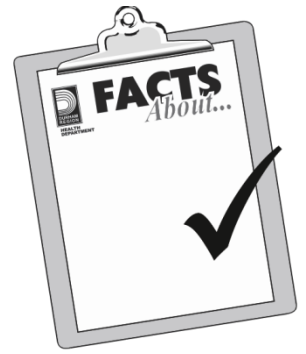




# FACTS

## About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



# Measles

## What is it?

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. Since the measles vaccine was licensed in 1963 there has been a dramatic decline in the number of cases. Although measles is still very common in some parts of the world; most cases in Canada arise from travel or contact with people from areas where measles is common.

The incidence of measles has declined in Ontario since a two-dose MMR vaccination program was introduced in 1996. Measles cases generally occur in young un-immunized children or older children, adolescents and adults who received only one dose of vaccine.

## How is it spread?

- The measles virus is spread easily from person to person through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- It can also be spread by having direct contact with nose and throat secretions and less commonly by having contact with articles freshly contaminated with nose and throat secretions.
- The measles virus can remain contagious in the air or on infected surfaces for at least 2 hours.
- Measles is contagious 4 days before and 4 days after the start of the rash.
- All people who have not had the disease or who have not been fully immunized are at risk of getting measles if they are exposed to the virus.

## What do I look for?

- Symptoms of measles include, fever, runny nose, cough, drowsiness, irritability, soreness and redness of the eyes, and small white spots in the mouth. A red blotchy rash appears on the third to seventh day, beginning on the face and spreading down the body.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

## Measles

- Complications of measles can include diarrhea, pneumonia, hearing loss or inflammation of the brain.
- Anyone with symptoms of measles should see a doctor/health care provider. It is recommended to call ahead to notify the clinic before arrival and to mask before entering the clinic.
- Laboratory tests will be done to determine whether or not the person has measles. If measles is suspected, stay home; do not attend school, daycare, work places, sporting events or any group setting until 4 days after the rash.

## How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for a person with measles. Supportive care such as plenty of fluids, rest and good nutrition can help to avoid complications.

## How can I protect myself?

- Measles is best prevented by vaccination.
- See Facts About...Measles, Mumps, Rubella Vaccines.
- Keep up to date with vaccinations and speak to your doctor/health care provider about your need for other vaccines.
- Speak with your doctor/health care provider if you are travelling to an area where measles has been reported.
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine is recommended ideally within 72 hours after exposure.
- Measles Immune globulin (Ig) may be recommended for infants less than 12 months of age, pregnant women or people who have a lowered immune system within 6 days of exposure to the disease.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly dirty.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow and encourage others to do the same.
- Wash your hands after handling nose and throat discharges (i.e., after disposal of facial tissues containing nose and throat discharges).
- Do not share water bottles, straws, eating utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, toys or anything else that has been in contact with saliva, nose or throat secretions.
- If you are ill, stay at home and isolate yourself from others.

June 8, 2018

For more information

DURHAM REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 or [durham.ca](http://durham.ca)

