

Measles: Causes, Symptoms, Complications, and Treatment

Considered an infectious but routine “childhood” illness, measles¹ are caused by virus generally spread by droplet, entering the body via the nose or mouth. Although the measles virus was isolated in 1954 and “targeted” for immunization, the illness has not been eradicated and probably should not be since it actually serves to bolster the immune system. Unfortunately, attempts to eradicate the disease through immunization are suspected to be the cause of more serious or complicated chronic conditions². In fact, the term “uncomplicated measles” is given to the illness when it runs a course without related complications.

The disease incubates in approximately 10 – 14 days, and generally begins with symptoms of fever and a runny nose, accompanied by sneezing and/or a cough. Since the virus enters via the mucous membranes, there may be swollen eyes, sensitivity to light, and conjunctivitis. The presence of Koplik’s Spots, usually appearing 3 – 5 days prior to measles rash, surround areas of inflammation and can be used to distinguish between measles and a common cold. In the 3 to 5 days following, the recognizable rash begins to appear, starting behind the ears. The rash spreads across the face, down the neck, and finally across the trunk and down the limbs, and as this occurs, the fever should abate. There may be generalized enlargement of lymph nodes as well. The rash appears pinkish and develops to deep red or purplish, becoming more popular and blotchy (see photo from the Centers for Disease Control). The rash will begin to fade to a brownish color in 24 – 48 more hours, and by the end of 7 – 10 days, the rash should be gone.



CDC

Figure 1: Measles Rash, CDC

Complications can be quite severe in under-developed regions, resulting in a very high mortality rate (up to 10 percent). Even where nutrition and access to healthcare are quite satisfactory, complications can occur, although the mortality rate is considerably lower (one case in one thousand). Complications can be more severe among adults who have the illness, and may be seriously life-threatening for immunocompromised patients (thirty percent mortality rate).

Complications and symptoms to be watching for are summarized in Table 1.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measles>. Measles, also known as rubeola, is a disease caused by a virus, specifically a paramyxovirus of the genus Morbillivirus. Reports of measles go back to at least 600 BCE, however, the first scientific description of the disease and its distinction from smallpox is attributed to the Persian physician Ibn Razi (Rhazes) 860-932 who published a book entitled "Smallpox and Measles." In 1954, the virus causing the disease was isolated, and licensed vaccines to prevent the disease became available in 1963. Measles is spread through respiration (contact with fluids from an infected person's nose and mouth, either directly or through aerosol transmission), and is highly contagious—90% of people without immunity sharing a house with an infected person will catch it. There is no specific treatment for uncomplicated measles. Most patients with uncomplicated measles will recover with rest and supportive treatment.

² O’Shea, Tim. *The Sanctity of Human Blood*. Eighth Edition. San Jose: Two Trees. 2004. The book discusses the history of immunization, cites specific cases of poor management and tracking of adverse side effects, and discusses the risks involved.

Complication	Symptoms
Encephalitis, Febrile Convulsion	Increasing fever, irritability, stiff neck, photophobia, twitching
Pneumonia	Increasing fever, cough, difficulty breathing
Otitis Media	Fever does not decline, earache, irritability
Corneal Ulceration	Eye symptoms that worsen, pain
Diarrhea	Runny stool

The illness should be allowed to run a normal course if there are no complications. Plenty of rest and a balanced diet and fluid intake are essential.

Conventionally, complications may be treated with antibiotics (and in fact, antibiotics may be given with the mistaken intent to “prevent” problems). Holistically, complications would be treated if the patient did not return to full health or became “stuck” during the course of the illness (the rash did not fully erupt, or will not subside, fever remains, ear infection results, and so forth). Ideally, homeopathic treatment will permit the case to “finish” and come to full resolution, thus strengthening the patient’s immune system.

The MMR vaccine, while marketed as a preventative, is suppressive from a holistic perspective. Unfortunately, many countries mandate the vaccine and parents are not able to avoid this for their children without a significant struggle.³ To say the least, mandated childhood vaccination is a highly sensitive and controversial topic.

A similar virus with less severe symptoms, Rubella (commonly known as German measles⁴) is suspected to go unnoticed in up to 50 percent of cases.



USA Vaccine
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³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measles>. The recent vaccine controversy in the United Kingdom regarding a potential link between the combined MMR vaccine (vaccinating children from mumps, measles and rubella) and autism has prompted a resurgence in popularity of the “measles party”, where parents deliberately infect the child with measles in order to build up the child’s immunity without requiring an injection. This practice poses many health risks to the child, and has been discouraged by the National Health Service.

<http://www.mmrthefacts.nhs.uk/basics/homeopathic.php>. “Quite simply, there is no evidence that homeopathy can offer an effective alternative to immunisation. The Council of the [Faculty of Homeopathy](#) recommends that, unless there are sound medical reasons not to, children should be immunised with conventionally tested and approved vaccines.”

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubella>. Rubella (also known as epidemic roseola, German measles, liberty measles or three-day measles) is a disease caused by the Rubella virus. It is often mild and an attack can pass unnoticed. However, this can make the virus difficult to diagnose. The virus usually enters the body through the nose or throat. The disease can last 1-5 days. Children recover more quickly than adults. Like most viruses living along the respiratory tract, it is passed from person to person by tiny droplets in the air that are breathed out. Rubella can also be transmitted from a mother to her developing baby through the bloodstream via the placenta. The virus has an incubation period of 2 to 3 weeks during which it becomes established. The name German measles has nothing to do with Germany. It comes from the Latin germanus, meaning “similar”, since rubella and measles share many symptoms.