

# MEASLES

Measles is a viral illness which is very infectious. The virus is passed in the secretions of the infected person's nose and throat and is spread by their sneezing and coughing. It is possible to catch measles from direct contact with articles which have been contaminated by these infected secretions e.g. hankies or tissues. It is one of the most highly infectious communicable diseases- contact of 15 minutes or more in the same room as someone with measles is sufficient to be deemed a significant exposure and to transmit the infection.

## Symptoms

Fever  
Irritability  
Cold-like symptoms - running nose  
Red and watery eyes or conjunctivitis  
Dry 'croupy' cough  
Koplik spots. White spots on the gums (2nd and 3rd day)  
Rash (3rd or 4th day) starting on the face and behind the ears, then spreading down the body  
Diarrhoea - often in the early stages in children

## Incubation

7 to 14 days (average 10 – 12 days)



## Measles is a Notifiable disease.

**Inform Public Health England** on 03442250562 or fax 0151 236 2488. PHE will contact all close contacts. Vulnerable contacts may need post exposure prophylaxis with MMR or human immunoglobulin as appropriate.  
A swab may be sent to confirm

## Patient entering GP practice

Does the patient have a rash?  
Does the patient have a fever?  
If the answer is YES to both, measles must be considered  
Has the patient completed a full course of MMR?  
If the answer is NO  
**Isolate patient**  
Only measles immune staff to care for patient  
If diagnosed with measles by GP, notify PHE.  
The room that patient was seen in to be closed for 2 hrs and then cleaned before use.

## Complications of Measles

Ear infections (approx. 1 in 20)  
Bronchitis/pneumonia (approx. 1 in 25)  
Convulsions/fits (approx. 1 in 200)  
Encephalitis or meningitis (approx. 1 in 1000)

**Treatment** There is no specific treatment for Measles infection but an appropriate medicine such as paracetamol to help bring down a high temperature should be used. Also, if a secondary infection develops the doctor may prescribe antibiotics to treat this e.g. an ear or chest infection.

Measles is infectious from the start of the symptoms (typically 4 days before the appearance of the rash) to four days after.  
**Stay off school/work for 4 days from onset of rash.**

MMR vaccine is usually given at age 12-13 months and at 3yrs 4 months but can be given to individuals of any age. The MMR vaccine can be given on the NHS to adults who may need it, including people born from 1970-79 who may have only been vaccinated against measles, as well as those born from 1980-90 who may not be protected against mumps.