

# 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.

Measles is infectious from the start of the symptoms (typically 4 days before the appearance of the rash) to four days after.  
**Children should stay off school/nursery for 4 days from onset of rash. They should also be clinically well.**

## 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)



## 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.

## 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)

**Measles is a Notifiable disease.**

**The GP will inform Public Health England of suspected and confirmed cases.**

MMR vaccine is given to children at age 12-13 months and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose at 3yrs 4 months.

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.

Pregnant staff should contact their midwife/GP for advice if they have contact with a child with measles  
Please contact the Infection control team on 01744 457 314/312 for further advice support.