

Measles (or rubeola), highly contagious viral infection characterized by a fever, cough, spots on the gums, and a red rash that usually begins at the head and neck and slowly moves down to cover the entire body. The measles virus Morbillivirus is spread by inhalation of airborne droplets of infected nasal discharge. The incubation period is 7 to 14 days. Measles once occurred in epidemics throughout the world, but immunization has greatly reduced the occurrence in developed countries. In developing countries, the disease causes more than a million deaths per year. In the United States, immunization is a requirement for school admission.

The symptoms and rash usually fade after a few days. In some instances, however, complications and secondary infections may prolong the illness. These include ear and chest infections, diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, occurs in about one in 1,000 measles cases. A progressive brain disorder, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, occurs in about one in one million cases. There is now evidence that the occurrence of measles during pregnancy causes birth defects, but it results in the death of a fetus in one in 20 cases. Treatment usually includes bed rest, drinking plenty of fluids, taking acetaminophen to reduce the fever, and application of lotions to relieve the itching

Measles      Live virus      Children at age 12-15

black measles

—n. A severe form of measles, characterized by a dark rash.

measles

(mē'zlez) —n. 1. a. An acute, contagious virus disease, usually occurring in childhood and characterized by the eruption of red spots.

measles

measles (mē'zlez) or rubeola, highly contagious viral disease spread by droplet spray from the mouth, nose, and throat during the infectious stage (beginning two to four days before the rash appears and lasting two to five days thereafter). Early symptoms (fever, redness of eyes) are followed by characteristic white spots in the mouth and a facial rash that spreads to the rest of the body. Although one attack confers lifelong immunity, immunization is advisable because of the possibility of serious secondary infection. See also RUBELLA.

The immunizing substance is usually introduced through a scrape in the skin, called inoculation, although the Sabin polio vaccine is taken orally. Protection lasts for varying periods: the plague vaccine for only six months; the yellow fever vaccine for ten years.

Measles, also rubeola, acute, highly contagious, fever-producing disease caused by a filterable virus, different from the virus that causes the less serious disease German measles, or rubella. Measles is characterized by small red dots appearing on the surface of the skin, irritation of the eyes (especially on exposure to light), coughing, and a runny nose. About 12 days after first exposure, the fever, sneezing, and runny nose appear. Coughing and swelling of the neck glands often follow. Four days later, red spots appear on the face or neck and then on the trunk and limbs. In 2 or 3 days the rash subsides and the fever falls; some peeling of the involved skin areas may take place. Infection of the middle ear may also occur.

Measles was formerly one of the most common childhood diseases. Since the development of an effective vaccine in 1963, it has become much less frequent. By 1988, annual measles cases in the U.S. had been reduced to fewer than 3500, compared with about 500,000 per year in the early 1960s. However, the number of new cases jumped to more than 18,000 in 1989 and to nearly 28,000 in 1990. Most of these cases occurred among inner-city preschool children and recent immigrants, but adolescents and young adults, who may have lost immunity (see Immunization) from their childhood vaccinations, also experienced an increase. In 1991, the number of new cases dropped to fewer than 10,000. The reasons for this resurgence and subsequent decline are not clearly understood. In other parts of the world measles is still a common childhood disease. In the U.S., measles is rarely fatal; should the virus spread to the brain, however, it can cause death or brain damage (see Encephalitis).

No specific treatment for measles exists. Patients are kept isolated from other susceptible individuals, usually resting in bed, and are treated with aspirin, cough syrup, and skin lotions to lessen fever, coughing, and itching. The disease usually confers immunity after one attack, and an immune pregnant woman passes the antibody in the globulin fraction of the blood serum, through the placenta, to her fetus.

rubeola (measles)

measles are spread by contamination of the air by infected patients.

measles

Measles, or rubeola, is a highly contagious viral disease. It usually affects children but can occur at any age in susceptible persons. The measles virus is not the same virus that causes GERMAN MEASLES, or rubella.

The virus is transmitted by sneezing, coughing, and direct personal contact. The early symptoms--fever, malaise, sore muscles, headache, eye irritation, and sensitivity to light--occur about 11 days after infection. Nasal discharge, sneezing, and coughing develop rapidly. Two to four days after the first symptom, a characteristic skin rash appears which fades after a few days. While not a particularly severe disease, measles does reduce normal resistance, making a patient susceptible to more serious secondary bacterial infections. In rare cases, the virus enters the brain to cause a form of encephalitis. Measles was once common throughout the world. Explosive outbreaks would occur, particularly in institutional settings or military barracks. But in 1963 the measles vaccine was introduced, which greatly reduced the incidence. However, the 1980s saw a marked increase in measles cases in the United States. Experts believe this rise may have been caused by the failure of many infants to be vaccinated at the age of 15 months. In addition, about 5 percent of vaccinated adults are not adequately protected by a single dose of vaccine. Physicians now recommend that everyone receive

two doses of measles vaccine. Medical treatment consists of symptom relief and prevention of secondary infection with antibiotics. Infection confers lifelong immunity

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