



# Central Michigan District Health Department

*Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities*



Jennifer Morse, MD, MPH, FAAFP  
Medical Director

Steve Hall, RS, MS  
Health Officer

## Measles

### **What is Measles?**

Measles is an acute respiratory illness caused by a virus. The virus is very contagious.

### **What are the symptoms of Measles?**

Initial symptoms of measles include cough, runny noses, red, watery eyes, and a high fever. 2-3 days later, tiny white spots, called Koplik spots, may appear inside the mouth. Then, on approximately days 3-5 a rash breaks out. The rash usually begins as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spread down to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet.

### **How does it spread?**

This virus lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person. It can live for up to two hours in an airspace. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch an object that has the infected virus on it; and then that person touches their eyes, nose, or mouth, they can become infected. This illness is more common in late winter and early spring.

### **How long is the person contagious?**

A person can spread Measles up to **4 days before** the rash appears and for **4 days after** the rash appears.

### **What is the treatment?**

Treat your symptoms. Stay away from others as soon as you feel unwell and until 4 days after the appearance of the rash.

### **Can Measles be serious?**

Ear infection, diarrhea or pneumonia could occur because of Measles. Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) is an uncommon, but serious complication of Measles.

### **Who needs immunizations?**

Talk to your health care professional to see if you are protected against measles.