Measles Fact Sheet

جامعة الملك عبدالله للعلوم والتقنية
King Abdullah University of Science and Technology

Health, Safety and Environment
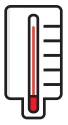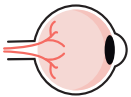
What is measles?

Measles is one of the most highly contagious viruses in the world. Prior to mass vaccination programs there were 6 million deaths per year in the world and many more cases of brain damage and hearing loss. Neurological damage/death still occurs in 2-3 cases per 1000 in industrialized countries.

What are the symptoms?

Usually begin with a fever, red irritated eyes, runny nose, cough and white spots inside the mouth. A red blotchy rash appears between the third to seventh day, beginning behind the ears and on the face spreading down to the trunk and then the extremities. The fever often rises as the rash appears. The rash may last 4-7 days and often disappears in the same direction it appeared. The disease can be severe in people that have compromised immune systems due to underlying medical conditions.

A person will develop symptoms of measles between 7-18 days (average is 10 days), beginning with a fever.

How is it transmitted?

A person with a measles infection can infect other people 1 day before they develop a fever until 4 days after they develop a rash. It is spread by coughing and by direct contact with nasal and oral secretions. It only survives for up to 2 hours outside the human body.

How is it managed?

People born prior to 1970 can be assumed to have acquired natural immunity to measles. Individuals born in or after 1970 are considered to be immune if they have a confirmed prior infection or 2 doses of measles containing vaccine. If you are not sure of your immune status you should see your doctor.

Do you need a booster shot?

There have been reports in the media that people may have to have an additional dose of vaccine. However, at this time Health experts are recommending the normal 2-doses in anyone born in or after 1970 that has not had a documented case of measles. A booster is not currently recommended.

What to do if you have symptoms:

Measles is very infectious. If you are sick stay home and phone KAUST Health for advice.

Taken from: CDC