



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

HOCKING COUNTY HEALTH **DEPARTMENT**

350 State Route 664 North ~ Logan, Ohio 43138
Phone 740-385-3030 Fax 740-385-2252

With the recent measles outbreak in the media lately, the public needs to know the facts about this virus, how it is spread and how to prevent it. Firstly, measles is caused by a highly contagious virus called Rubeola. It "lives" in the nose and throat mucous of an infected person and is spread when the infected person coughs or sneezes. Others become infected when they breathe contaminated air or touch a surface contaminated with the virus. The measles virus can be spread from four days before the rash first appears to four days after the rash first appears.

The measles typically begins with high fever, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. These symptoms are pretty general and do not necessarily mean that one is infected with the measles virus. Then, two or three days after the initial symptoms begin, tiny white spots, called Koplik spots, may appear inside the mouth. Later, about three to five days after symptoms begin; a rash of flat red spots appear on the face and hairline and eventually move downward toward the trunk, legs and feet. This rash may be accompanied by a fever of 104 degrees Fahrenheit or greater. The fever and rash eventually fade after a few days.

Complications from this disease usually occur in children younger than five years of age and adults older than twenty years of age. However, measles can be serious in all age groups. Ear infections that can result in permanent hearing loss and diarrhea are some common complications of measles infections. Severe complications may occur in some individuals such as pneumonia or encephalitis (swelling of the brain). In the United States, one or two out of every 1,000 children who get measles will die from it. Worldwide, an estimated 146,000 people die from this disease each year.

With that said, measles may be a mild disease in some yet, serious in others. So, how do we prevent the measles virus from spreading? According to the CDC, the MMR vaccine has led to a greater than 99% reduction in measles cases compared to the pre-vaccine era. The virus is highly contagious and can spread rapidly in areas where people are not vaccinated. In the year 2000, measles was declared eliminated from the United States thanks to a highly effected vaccination program and better measles control.

CDC recommends that all children get two doses of the MMR vaccine. The first dose is typically given at twelve through 15 months of age and the second does at four through six years of age. International travelers, students in post-high school educational institutions and healthcare personnel who do not have evidence of immunity should receive two doses of the vaccine. Other adults with no evidence of immunity should receive at least one dose. Evidence of immunity may include: written documentation of adequate vaccination, laboratory evidence of immunity, laboratory confirmation of measles or birth in the United States before 1957.

Call your physician or local health department if you have any questions regarding the measles or MMR vaccine.



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