

Recognizing measles in healthcare clinics

What is measles?

Measles is a **highly** infectious respiratory disease. While not commonly seen in the U.S., reported cases and outbreaks are on the rise.

How does measles spread?

Measles easily spreads person-to-person, through droplets when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks. The measles virus can survive for 2 hours in the air or on surfaces where an infected person has been.

What are the signs and symptoms of measles?

The first symptoms of measles resemble a cold and appear 7-12 days after exposure to the virus. These include a cough, fever of 101°F or greater, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Sometimes white spots appear in the mouth (called Koplik's spots). These mild symptoms may last 3-5 days.

A few days later, a rash begins around the ears and hairline, and spreads to cover the face, torso, and arms. The rash may last about 5-6 days.

How is measles diagnosed?

Doctors can usually diagnose measles based on the rash and other signs. Perform a blood test or swab from the throat or nose on any person who is suspected to have measles.

What actions can prevent the spread of measles in my facility?

If you suspect measles **when the patient makes an appointment**, plan which entrance they will use or have staff assess the patient outside or in their car. The patient should wear a mask on arrival and medical staff should move the patient quickly into a room.

If a patient with symptoms of measles or known exposure arrives at your facility **without advance notice**, you should:

- Provide the patient with a mask to wear at all times.
- Move the patient away from the waiting area. Have the patient wait outside or in a private room with the door closed. If available, an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR) is best.
- Make sure staff wear an N95 or other respirator and follow airborne precautions, regardless of vaccination.
- Notify public health of the suspected measles exposure.

Who is most at risk?

Individuals who are unvaccinated, pregnant women, infants younger than 6 months of age, and those with weakened immune systems are at the most risk.

Where can I get more information?

- [Utah Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [CDC](#)

If a patient comes in with



(Povorozniuk, 2024)

**a rash on their head
and torso,**
after a recent fever, respiratory
symptoms, red, watery eyes

—AND—

**Is not
vaccinated
against
measles**

OR

**Has recently
traveled
internationally**

OR

**Knows they
were
exposed to
measles**

**This patient may have measles and there is
a risk of exposing everyone in the building.**

Move them out of the waiting area immediately.

Get them into a private exam room and close the door (a negative pressure/AIIR room is best) or have them wait outside.

If a patient calls with these symptoms, have them wait outside or in their car. Arrange for your staff to evaluate them outside or bring them in through a back entrance, if possible.

Povorozniuk, L. (2024). Measles stock photo. iStock. Getty Images. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from <https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/viral-disease-measles-rash-on-the-body-of-the-child-allergy-gm2053752276-563466373>.



Do not enter if ...

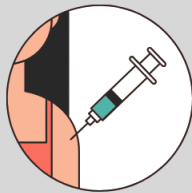


(Povorozniuk, 2024)

You have a rash on your head and torso, after a recent fever, respiratory symptoms, or watery eyes

—AND—

You are not vaccinated against measles



OR

You have recently traveled internationally



OR

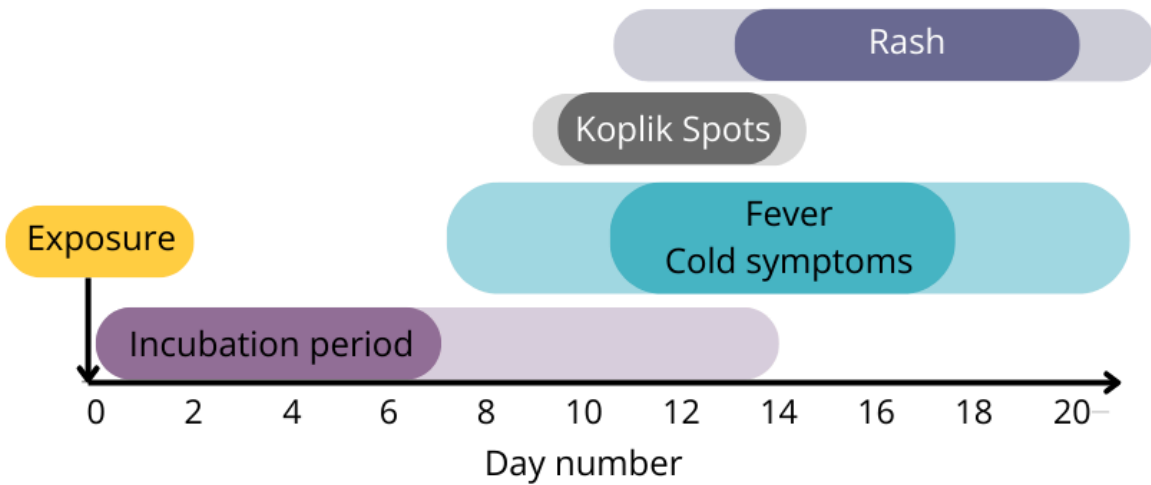
You know you were exposed to measles



Call us regarding your symptoms and we will arrange to have you seen.

Povorozniuk, L. (2024). Measles stock photo. iStock. Getty Images. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from <https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/viral-disease-measles-rash-on-the-body-of-the-child-allergy-gm2053752276-563466373>.

What measles is doing



What you should be doing

