

# Facts about Measles

**Measles is a disease caused by the measles virus. Measles can be a serious disease that can cause swelling of the brain, convulsions, deafness and brain damage.**

People with measles can also get pneumonia. Measles is much less common since routine immunization of children against measles began.

After someone catches the measles virus, it can take 8-12 days for signs of the disease to appear. The signs of measles are:

- A temperature of 38.5°C or higher, cough, runny nose and watery eyes
- small, red spots in the mouth
- a red rash that begins on the face and spreads all over the body

Young children may also develop diarrhea or an ear infection with measles.

Measles is catching 1 to 2 days before any signs appear and from 3 to 5 days before a rash appears. It remains catching until 4 days after a rash appears.

## How is Measles Spread?

**Measles is spread through contact with droplets coughed, sneezed or breathed into the air from someone with measles.**

**Measles is a reportable disease in British Columbia.** If there is a case of measles in a child or adult in the child care centre or school, immediately report the case to the Licensing Officer or Public Health Nurse assigned to your centre or school.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol™, Tempra™) or ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™) may help reduce a fever and provide some comfort. Always follow the directions on the package about how much and how often to take acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

**Never give products containing ASA (acetylsalicylic acid, such as Aspirin™) to anyone under the age of 20 years.** Use of ASA products by children can lead to Reye's syndrome, a serious condition affecting the brain and liver.



## What to Do at Home

- If another child has measles and your child has not had the measles vaccine, a measles shot, given as soon as possible and not later than 72 hours after exposure, may prevent the disease.
- If your child gets measles, tell the caregivers at the child care centre or school.
- **Talk to your doctor** or Public Health Nurse, if you have any questions about measles.



**Children with measles should not go to the child care centre or school until at least four days after the appearance of a rash and only when they can take part in activities.**

**If there is a case of measles in a school or child care centre, all children and adults who have not had measles disease or measles vaccine should stay away from the child care centre or school, unless they receive measles vaccine within 72 hours of last exposure to a case of measles or until the Medical Health Officer says it is safe for them to return.**



## MEASLES is a vaccine-preventable disease

Measles vaccine is provided free to healthy children, aged one year and older, as part of routine immunization. It is given in a shot that also includes vaccine against mumps and rubella (MMR). Children under one year of age may get the vaccine if there is an outbreak of measles or if they are to travel to an area where measles is common. If the vaccine is received prior to one year of age, the dose will need to be repeated.

Measles vaccine is also provided to older children and to adults born after 1970 who have not been immunized. Two doses of a measles containing vaccine are recommended.

Measles can be prevented in unimmunized people who are exposed to measles, if they receive the vaccine within 72 hours.