

Common Questions About Protecting Children From Measles

QUESTIONS ABOUT MEASLES

Q Can measles make you sick?

Yes. Measles can be very serious and can lead to severe complications, including death. For example, about 1 in 5 unvaccinated children who get measles will need to go to the hospital, 1 in 20 may develop pneumonia, and 1 in 1,000 will develop life-threatening swelling of the brain.

Q What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles symptoms typically show up 7 to 14 days after being exposed. Common symptoms include high fever, cough, runny nose, rash, and red, watery eyes. The rash from measles usually starts a few days after the fever begins and shows up first on the face and spreads downward.

Q If someone gets measles, can they get treatment?

There are no specific treatments or cures for measles. Medical care focuses on easing symptoms and supportive care. The best way to keep your child safe from measles is to ensure they receive the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine.

Q What should I do if I think my child has been exposed to measles?

You may receive a call from the health department telling you that your child might have been exposed to measles. Follow instructions from the health department. If your child begins to develop measles symptoms, call their doctor or a hospital right away so they can tell you what to do next. **Call before you arrive** to ensure they are ready for you to have a safe visit.

QUESTIONS ABOUT MMR VACCINATION

Q Is MMR vaccination safe? How do we know?

Yes. Millions of children have safely received MMR vaccine since it was licensed more than 50 years ago. CDC and FDA use several safety systems to continuously monitor and make sure vaccines are safe. MMR has also been tested for safety globally.

Q What are the side effects or risks of MMR vaccination?

After getting the MMR vaccine, your child might experience mild side effects, like soreness where the shot was given, fever, or rash. These usually only last a few days and go away on their own. More serious side effects are rare, but may include high fever that could cause a febrile seizure. Febrile seizures are not generally considered to cause any permanent harm or have any lasting effects.

Q Are there any long-term risks after MMR vaccination?

We have decades of experience with MMR vaccine and no evidence that it causes long-term harm.

Q Do vaccines like MMR cause autism?

There has been extensive research involving hundreds of thousands of children that shows no connection between vaccines and autism.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHILDHOOD VACCINES:



Questions About Measles

cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html



About Vaccines for your Children

cdc.gov/vaccines-children/about/index.html



BE READY FOR MEASLES
cdc.gov/measles

QUESTIONS ABOUT MMR VACCINATION

Q How well do MMR vaccines work?

The MMR vaccine works very well. After two doses, it protects about 97% of people from measles. One dose protects about 93%. It's rare for vaccinated people to get measles, but it can happen. However, they are less likely to spread the disease to others. They also typically have milder illness and fewer complications.

Q If I don't vaccinate my kids, are they really at risk for getting measles?

Measles spreads very easily and is one of the most contagious diseases in the world. Anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk. With more travel and drops in vaccination rates, we've seen a rise in measles cases, making MMR vaccination even more important.

Q Our family is planning an international trip. How can we protect our child from measles?

Before an international trip, everyone in your family should be protected from measles through MMR vaccination because measles outbreaks happen worldwide. These recommendations include an early MMR dose for infants ages 6–11 months and two doses (separated by 28 days) for children ages 12 months and older, teens, and adults who are not already vaccinated. Getting vaccinated at least 2 weeks before the trip provides the best protection against measles.

Q Are babies immune to measles when they are born?

When a baby is born to a mother who is immune to measles, they receive some protection from the mother's antibodies, but this protection weakens in the first few months of their life. Vaccines, such as the MMR vaccine, are a safe way to help your child build immunity without the risks of getting measles.

Q Why do babies need to get the MMR vaccine so young?

Vaccines are recommended early in life to help protect babies and children before they encounter serious illnesses, like measles. Children routinely receive their first MMR vaccine at 12–15 months because this is when protection from their mother's antibodies has worn off. At that age, children who become infected with measles have a higher chance of serious complications.

Q Can babies' bodies be overwhelmed by getting so many vaccines at once?

No, healthy babies fight off thousands of germs every day. Vaccines use antigens, which are parts of germs that cause the body's immune system to build antibodies that fight off diseases. Even if babies receive several vaccines in one day, vaccines contain only a tiny fraction of the antigens that babies encounter every day in their environment.

Q My child is sick right now. Is it okay to still get shots today?

Tell me about your child's illness. When did it start and what are the symptoms? Usually, children can get vaccinated even if they have a mild illness like a cold, earache, mild fever, or diarrhea. Keep in mind that there is no health benefit to waiting to vaccinate your child if they have a mild illness. It's important that children get their vaccines on time so they're protected against serious diseases.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHILDHOOD VACCINES:



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[cdc.gov/measles/
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