

Protect your child from measles



What is measles?

Measles is a viral illness that spreads very easily and can lead to serious and sometimes fatal complications. It often starts with a fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes. It is followed days later by a rash that begins on the face and spreads down towards the rest of the body.

For the past two decades, measles has been rare in the United States, but outbreaks of the disease are occurring in areas where vaccination rates have fallen. Most children who get measles are not up to date on recommended vaccines or are not old enough to be vaccinated.

Why does my child need protection against measles?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can survive in the air for up to two hours— it is so contagious that up to 9 out of 10 people will be infected if unprotected and exposed to the virus.

About 1 out of every 3 people who catch measles will develop a complication. The most common complications are ear infections and diarrhea, but more serious complications like pneumonia and encephalitis (swelling of the brain due to infection), or even death can occur due to measles.

Nearly 1 out of every 5 people who catch measles ends up in the hospital. Measles can be especially dangerous in infants and young children, as well as persons with weakened immune systems. They may need to be hospitalized to provide oxygen or mechanical ventilation due to difficulty breathing or IV fluids due to severe dehydration.

Catching measles during pregnancy can be dangerous, increasing the risk of premature labor, miscarriage or giving birth to a low-birth-weight baby.

What is MMR?

MMR is a vaccine that protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. Infants are recommended to get their first MMR vaccine at age 12-15 months followed by a second dose at age 4-6 years.

Is it safe?

The MMR vaccine is safe - hundreds of millions of doses have been given over the past 50 years. Side effects of the vaccine occur infrequently, but can include fever, soreness at the injection site and rash. If your child has a weakened immune system, you should talk to your child's doctor prior to vaccinating.

The MMR vaccine does **not** cause autism.

Is it effective?

The measles vaccine is very effective. Two doses of measles vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus. One dose is about 93% effective.

Vaccinating your child according to the recommended MMR schedule is the single best, life-long protection you can provide them against measles.



To learn more about the MMR vaccine or measles, please scan the QR code or visit texaschildrens.org/measles

