

Measles

Staff Fact Sheet

What is it?

Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral respiratory illness. It is characterized by a prodrome (before the onset of rash) of fever and malaise, cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis and, grey-white spots in the mouth, followed by a maculopapular (red, raised) rash which spreads from the head down.

Symptoms develop between 7 to 21 days after exposure but typically appear around day 10.

People are infectious from 4 days before the rash appears until about 4 days after the onset of the rash.

Serious complications can occur in children, pregnant women and persons with weak immune systems. 1 in 3 children develop complications and 7 of 10 persons with transplantation or cancer may end up dying.

How is it spread?

It is spread through the air and if you have never had measles infection or vaccine you have a 90% chance of developing measles after being in the same room as an infected person as little as 5 minutes

How do I prevent spread to others?

Measles is a **vaccine-preventable disease**, and all healthy age-eligible children and adults should be vaccinated to prevent spread to persons at risk for complications who may not be able to be, or choose not to be, immunized. **All healthcare workers should have 2 documented doses of measles-containing vaccines, or serologic proof of immunity to be considered protected, regardless of the year of birth.**

If you are unsure of your status, you are welcome to contact Occupational Health Services to review your records and update if required.

While in hospital, for those suspected or known to have measles, airborne precautions, in a private room under negative pressure is required. If a negative pressure room is not available, a private room with portable HEPA filtration unit and with the door closed is required.

Terminal clean is required:

- A 2 hour fallow time (time required for air circulation in the room to clear the room of viral particles) is required before admission of a non-immune patient.

- All personnel must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment during that 2 hour period.

While at home, care should be taken not to expose others to infection by staying home and not allowing others to visit for at least 4 days after the start of the rash.

How is it Diagnosed?

For all symptomatic patients with a history of travel OR non-immune patients with known exposure to measles a confirmation of diagnosis is via measles serology and PCR testing.

- Order [Measles IgG and IgM serology](#) testing AND;
- PCR testing with a nasopharyngeal or throat swab and urine PCR (Cerner order: VIRCRO – please specify “measles PCR” on the order comments). See PaLM test guide for [Virus Culture](#) for further details.

What to Do if You're Exposed to Measles at Work?

If you have received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, or have laboratory confirmation of immunity, you are protected against measles infection.

If you have been exposed and are not protected, please contact Occupational Health Services as soon as possible. Measles vaccine can be given for post-exposure prophylaxis if it is given within 72 hours (three days) of exposure. Follow up lab work is also recommended and work exclusion may be necessary, depending on the timeline.

Pregnant women are considered to be protected if they have 2 documented doses of measles-containing vaccine, or laboratory confirmation of immunity.

Individuals who are moderate to severely immunocompromised may be treated with post-exposure immune globulin up to six days after exposure. This would include pregnant individuals who also have an immunocompromising condition. These individuals should contact Occupational Health Services as soon as possible for individualized advice.

If you have been exposed to measles at work, and you are not protected, you must complete a SPEAK form.

What to Do if You're Exposed to Measles outside of Work?

If you have received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, or have laboratory confirmation of immunity, you are protected against measles infection.

If you have been exposed and are not protected, measles vaccine can be given for post-exposure prophylaxis if it is given within 72 hours (three days) of exposure.

Contact your health-care provider or the Middlesex-London Health Unit as soon as possible.

Individuals who are moderate to severely immunocompromised may be treated with post-exposure immune globulin up to six days after exposure. This would include pregnant individuals who also have an immunocompromising condition. These individuals should contact their health-care provider, and the Middlesex-London Health Unit.

Hospital staff and affiliates will need to contact Occupational Health Services to discuss when they can return to work.

How is Measles Treated?

There is no treatment for this viral illness. Measures can be taken to relieve sore throat, cough and fever.

Immunization prior to exposure is the best defense against infection.

Do I Need to Report Measles in Patients to the Middlesex London Public Health Unit?

Yes, all known or suspected cases of measles need to be reported to the Middlesex-London Public Health Unit. Occupational Health Services also has a reporting obligation to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development for any staff who are unprotected and become exposed to measles at work. Measles may also be reported to WSIB if it is acquired through workplace exposure.

Further information can be found on the [IPAC Diseases and Condition page for Measles](#).

LHSC is the exclusive holder and owner of any and all rights of the LHSC Intellectual Property, material and to the work, and no other individual or entity may claim any rights, title, and/or interest in or to any confidential information or any material developed, the content or to the work. The content has been created specifically for LHSC and may not be applicable for other entities or hospitals. The LHSC Intellectual Property is subject to change and it is current as of insert current date. All materials and information in this presentation or ensuing discussion are Confidential Information, and are owned or controlled by LHSC. Unauthorized copying, reproduction, republishing, uploading, posting transmitting or duplicating any of the LHSC Intellectual Property is prohibited.