

**Exclusively** for Health Advocate Members

# Measles Q&A

## What You Need to Know

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Recent infections in California have brought measles (a once eliminated disease in the United States) back into the spotlight. Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus that can cause serious illness. Below is some information about measles and how you can protect yourself and your family.

### **Q How is measles spread?**

Measles spreads easily through the air through coughing and sneezing. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune will become infected.

### **Q What are the symptoms?**

Measles starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat, and is followed by a rash that spreads all over the body.

### **Q What are the complications?**

**Common complications include:**

- Ear infections that could lead to permanent hearing loss
- Diarrhea

**Severe complications include:**

- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Premature birth or low-birth-weight (pregnant women)
- Death

### **Q How can I protect myself and my family?**

If you've already had measles you can't get measles again. However, the best way to protect yourself and your family is to complete recommended doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. Exact vaccine recommendations vary by age – so talk to your doctor.

### **Q How much does the vaccine cost?**

Measles is a government-recommended vaccine. This means that there is no cost for people who have health insurance coverage that complies with the Affordable Care Act. Free and reduced cost vaccines are also available through public health services in affected areas.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

**We can help!** Your Personal Health Advocate will answer your questions, help you find a doctor, research free or low cost resources, and arrange a vaccination if needed.

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