



Gila County
Health & Emergency Management

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Measles Fact Sheet

Background

Measles is a very contagious respiratory illness that causes a rash and fever. It is most common in young children, but older children and adults who are not immune can also become infected. In rare cases measles can be deadly.

Symptoms

Symptoms develop 7 to 21 days after exposure and last for 5 to 10 days. Symptoms of measles are a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes followed by a rash that begins on the face and spreads downward to the rest of the body. Persons who have been vaccinated may develop a mild illness; more severe illness occurs in unvaccinated individuals.



Transmission

Measles spreads through the air when infected people cough or sneeze, and is highly contagious. The measles virus can remain in the air for up to 2 hours. Infected persons are contagious up to 2 days before symptoms develop and until 4 days after the rash disappears. People who don't have immunity can get the disease.

Treatment

Most persons with measles will recover in about a week without specific medical treatment. Tylenol and ibuprofen may be helpful to alleviate fever and discomfort. Approximately 30% of people with measles

will develop complications, including ear infection, deafness, pneumonia, and encephalitis. Young children, babies, and those with weakened immune systems are more likely to develop complications. About 1 out of 1,000 people with measles will die.

To protect other patients, if you suspect that you have measles, call before going to a medical facility.

Prevention

- Vaccination is the best prevention
- Children should get 1 dose of measles vaccine between 12 and 15 months of age and a 2nd dose between 4 and 6 years of age
- Persons born after 1957, who have not been vaccinated or had measles, should receive 2 doses of measles vaccine 4-6 weeks apart
- Persons with measles should stay home until 4 days after their rash is completely gone
- Consult your doctor if you come into contact with someone who has measles



For more information

If you need more information, please contact your primary care physician or Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management at (928) 402-8811.