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Measles: Make Sure You're Protected (Frequently Asked Questions)

Key Facts

- There have been no cases of measles in any San Francisco resident in 2015. However, there have been both workplace and BART exposures in San Francisco, which have not resulted in any known measles case.
- The best way to prevent measles is to be vaccinated. The measles vaccine is highly effective.
- Most people are vaccinated, and vaccinations are a regular part of pediatric primary care.
- Check with your regular health care provider for questions about your immunization status.

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles starts with fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. After 2-3 days a red rash develops on the face and neck and spreads downward to the chest and back, then arms and legs, while the fever continues. The rash usually lasts 5-6 days then, as the other symptoms end, the rash disappears in the same order that it appeared.

Most people get better about a week after the rash develops. However, the disease can be more serious for some people causing middle ear infection, pneumonia (lung infection with breathing trouble), or encephalitis (brain inflammation).

How is measles spread or passed to others?

Measles is spread by bodily fluids – drops of saliva from the mouth, mucus from the nose, coughing or sneezing, and tears from the eyes. The measles virus can also float in the air for up to 1 hour after someone with measles coughs or sneezes indoors. Someone who breathes air containing the measles virus can get measles.

People with measles can spread the disease to others from 4 days before the rash starts (before they know they have the disease), through 4 days after the rash begins.

How can I protect myself from getting measles?

People who already had measles infection can't get it again. If you never had measles, then you can protect yourself by making sure you're vaccinated. In the past, people could get measles (only) vaccine, but now the measles vaccine is combined with mumps and rubella protection into one vaccine called MMR.

Is it true that some people can't get measles?

Yes. Some people are immune to measles, meaning that their body has already learned how to fight off the virus, and they won't become sick from it. People can become immune to measles in two ways:

- If they've already had measles earlier in life, then they become immune and can't get it again.
- Vaccination stimulates the body's immune system to defend against measles infection.

How many doses of measles vaccine do I need?

Children: 2 doses. The 1st dose is given at age 12-15 months. The 2nd dose can be given as soon as 4 weeks after the 1st dose, but is usually given between ages 4 – 6 years.

Adults: Those born before 1957 usually had measles infection and don't need vaccine.

Those born in 1957 or later should have least 1 dose of measles or MMR vaccine.

Current and former college students, health care workers, and people traveling internationally should have 2 doses of measles or MMR vaccine given at least 4 weeks apart.

If you are uncertain if you are protected against measles, check your health records or contact your medical provider.

Where can I get a measles or MMR vaccine in San Francisco?

Check first with your regular medical provider. MMR vaccine is usually covered by your insurance and available at your provider's office. If your provider does not have MMR vaccine, the locations listed below are a good option.

Drop-In Locations for MMR Vaccine in San Francisco

Clinic Name	Address	Phone	Drop-In Times	Requirements	Cost
AITC Immunization and Travel Clinic www.TravelClinicSF.org	101 Grove St, Rm 102	(415) 554-2625	M,W,Th,F 9am-4pm Tues 9am-3pm		\$26 (for people without insurance or whose insurance does not cover MMR vaccine). \$95 regular price
Family Health Center at San Francisco General Hospital	995 Potrero Ave	(415) 206-2363	Call for appointment	Age 18 and younger meeting <u>all</u> criteria below: -don't already have a doctor -need vaccines in order to attend child care, school, or to qualify for a job -have Medi-Cal <u>or</u> no insurance <u>or</u> insurance that does not cover all vaccines -San Francisco Resident	Free
Ocean Park Health Center	1351 24th Avenue	(415) 682-1900	Tues 9:45-11:45am Thurs 1pm-4pm	Must be a San Francisco Resident	Free
Maxine Hall Health Center	1301 Pierce St	(415) 292-1300	Mon – Fri 9am-10am M,T, Th, F 1:30pm-3:30 pm	Must be a San Francisco Resident	Free

Clinic Name	Address	Phone	Drop-In Times	Requirements	Cost
Silver Avenue Family Health Center	1525 Silver Ave	(415) 657-1700	Weds 3:30pm-4:30pm (beginning 3/11/15)	Location not available until 3/11/15 Must be a San Francisco Resident	Free

Is the measles vaccine (MMR) safe?

The MMR vaccine has a long record of safety. Serious adverse reactions from MMR vaccine are rare. All reputable scientific studies have found no relationship between MMR vaccine and autism. For more information about MMR vaccine safety, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-mmr-color-office.pdf>

Is there treatment for measles?

There is no medicine that kills the measles virus once someone develops measles. Most people with measles get better by themselves. They should rest, drink plenty of fluids, and can take acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help reduce the fever and feel more comfortable.

People who are severely ill or who develop pneumonia, middle ear infection, or diarrhea should discuss treatment with their doctor. Although no medicine will make the measles virus go away, there may be a role for other medicines, such as antibiotics, in treating other possible reasons for infection.

Is it true that people who are vaccinated can still get measles?

Yes, but it is extremely unlikely. The vaccine works extremely well but is not 100% effective.

- After 1 dose of measles or MMR vaccine, 95 of 100 people (95%) are protected
- After 2 doses of measles or MMR vaccine, 99 of 100 people (99%) are protected

The second dose of vaccine helps to protect most of the people who did not become immune after one dose.

What does it mean to be “exposed” to measles?

“Exposed” means you’ve been in a situation where you can catch the virus from someone who already has measles. For example, you can be exposed by being in the same room, home, office, or waiting room with someone who has measles or by being there up to 1 hour after the person with measles has left.

For more information: <http://www.sfcddcp.org/measles>