Additional Frequently Asked Questions About Measles

MEASLES EXPOSURE

Q1.1: How contagious is measles?

A1.1: Measles is very contagious. If you are not immune, you can catch it just by being in a room where a person with measles has been. Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, even up to two hours after that person has left. You can catch it from an infected person even before they have a rash or other symptoms – from four days before they develop the measles rash through four days afterward.

Getting the measles vaccine is the best way to prevent measles.

Q1.2: What should I do if I think I or my child has measles?

A1.2: Stay home and call your health care provider right away. If you have measles, you could spread it to others who are not immune. That's why it's best to call your health care provider or emergency room before going to them. They can tell you the best way to get checked without infecting others.

Tell your health care provider if you, or your child, spent time with other people in the days before or after the measles rash began. These people may be at risk of getting measles themselves. Their health care providers or local health department might offer them a vaccine or immunoglobulin (IG) to help prevent them from getting measles.

Q1.3: We have someone infected with measles at home. Can we be around others?

A1.3: No. People who are sick with the measles need to stay home until they are no longer contagious. Their close family members are also at risk of getting measles if they are not already immune to it. They should also stay home for up to 21 days after they were exposed to measles. A person can spread measles to others even before they begin to feel sick.

If you have measles in your house, please talk to your health care provider or the local health department as soon as possible. They will tell you how long you and your family members should stay home and what to do if anyone else gets sick.

Q1.4: My child is younger than 6 months. How can I protect them from getting measles?

A1.4: Babies under 6 months are too young for the measles vaccine. But you can protect them by making sure everyone who lives in or visits your home is vaccinated. Avoid people who are sick with measles. Talk to your health care provider. Your child may benefit from immunoglobulin (IG), if they have been around someone who had measles.

Q1.5: If my children were excluded from school, can they still spend time with other children who were excluded?

A1.5: No, your children should stay home and away from other people for 21 days after the day they were last exposed to measles. They are at risk of getting sick and could spread measles even before they being to feel sick.

MEASLES VACCINATION

Q2.1: How well does the measles vaccine work?

A2.1: The measles vaccine works very well. Two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine are about 97% effective at protecting against measles. On the rare occasions that fully vaccinated people get the measles, they usually have a milder illness and are less likely to spread it to other people.

Q2.2: At what age can a child get the MMR vaccine?

A2.2: Most children receive their first MMR vaccine when they are 12 to 15 months old. The second dose is usually given between 4 and 6 years of age, but it may safely be given as soon as 28 days after the first dose.

Infants 6 to 11 months of age should get their first dose of MMR vaccine during a measles outbreak or before traveling overseas. They will still need a second dose given at 12 to 15 months and a third dose at 4 to 6 years of age to ensure protection and to meet school requirements.

Q2.3: Why is a second dose of MMR needed?

A2.3: A small number of people do not become immune to measles after their first dose. The second dose ensures as many people as possible are protected.

Q2.4: My child had measles. Does he or she still need the MMR vaccine?

A2.4: Yes. The MMR vaccine will protect them against two other diseases, mumps and rubella.

Q2.5: Is it safe for a baby to get the first dose of the MMR vaccine before 12 months of age?

A2.5: Yes, the MMR vaccine is safe for babies as young as 6 months of age. However, they will need to get two additional doses after their first birthday for full protection and to meet school requirements.

Q2.6: Is it safe for a child to get the second dose of the MMR vaccine before 4 years of age?

A2.6: Yes. The second dose may be safely given as soon as 28 days after the first dose.

Q2.7: What are the side effects of the MMR vaccine?

A2.7: The most common side effects are a mild fever, a rash, soreness or swelling where the shot was given, or temporary pain and stiffness in the joints

Severe allergic reactions to the MMR vaccine are rare. Do not get the MMR vaccine if you've had an allergic reaction after an earlier dose or are allergic to a part of the vaccine such as neomycin.

Q2.8: What should I do if I think my child is having an allergic reaction to the MMR vaccine?

A2.8: **Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital**. Signs of a **severe allergic reaction** can include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness. Allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare. Reactions can happen from few minutes to a few hours after a person gets a vaccine.

Q2.9: Who cannot get the MMR vaccine?

A2.9: People should not get the MMR vaccine if they:

- ever had a severe allergy to the MMR vaccine, or to a part of the vaccine such as neomycin,
- have a weak immune system, either from a disease or a medical treatment, or
- are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.

Children who are less than 6 months of age are too young to receive the MMR vaccine.

Talk to your health care provider if you are sick, have recently received blood products or immune globulin (IG), or have a bleeding disorder.

Q2.10: What are the ingredients in the MMR vaccine?

A2.10: The MMR vaccine package insert, which lists the vaccine ingredients, is available online at https://www.fda.gov/downloads/BiologicsBloodVaccines/UCM123789.pdf. For more information about vaccine ingredients, you can also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/additives.htm

Q2.11: I have an allergy to eggs. Can I still get the MMR vaccine?

A2.11: Yes. People who are allergic to eggs may get the MMR vaccine. They do not need a skin test first.

Q2.12: I have had two doses of measles vaccine. Do I need to check and see if I have immunity?

A2.12: If you have a written vaccine record that shows you received **two** doses of MMR or another vaccine that contains measles, then you have evidence of measles immunity. You do not need testing to confirm this.

If you think you were vaccinated but you do not have a record of it, talk to your health care provider. Your health care provider may recommend a blood test to prove your immunity or recommend another dose of the MMR vaccine.

Q2.13: Will doses of MMR vaccine given before the first birthday count for the school immunization requirements?

A2.13: No. Babies given the MMR vaccine before their first birthday will need a second dose on or after the first birthday, and a third dose at least 28 days after the first dose to meet school requirements.

Q2.14: Can the measles vaccine give you the measles?

A2.14: No. You cannot get the measles from the MMR vaccine. If you get the measles soon after the vaccine, it means you were likely exposed to the measles before you were vaccinated. But because you had the vaccine, your illness will likely be milder. A few people develop a measles-like rash after being vaccinated, but this type of rash is much milder than measles and cannot be spread to other people.

Q2.15: Can you get the measles from someone who recently got the MMR vaccine?

A2.15: No. The weakened viruses in the MMR vaccine cannot be spread from person-to-person.

Q2.16: Can I get *just* the measles vaccine? Do I have to get MMR?

A2.16: There is no vaccine available in the United States that only protects against measles. The MMR vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and those around you from measles. It also provides protection against both mumps and rubella.

Q2.17: My child is sick with a cold. Can she get the MMR vaccine?

A2.17: People who are sick with mild illnesses such as a cold may safely get vaccines. Let your health care provider know if your child is more seriously ill.

Q2.18: Why are people born before 1957 considered immune to measles?

A2.18: People born in the United States before 1957 lived at time when measles was very common. They are very likely to have had measles previously. If someone is not sure whether they ever had measles or the vaccine, they should speak with their health care provider about possibly being vaccinated.

IMMUNE GLOBULIN

Q3.1: What is Immune Globulin (IG)?

A3.1: IG is a medication that can help prevent measles or make the illness milder. IG is for people who have recently been exposed to measles, and:

- cannot get the MMR vaccine for medical reasons,
- are pregnant, or
- are younger than 12 months old.

IG must be given within six days of being exposed to measles in order for it to be helpful.

Q3.2: What are the side effects of Immune Globulin (IG)?

A3.2: Most people have no side effects to IG. When they do occur, they are usually mild and may include swelling, redness, pain, itching, fatigue, nausea or headache. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare. Blood clots may occur with immune globulin treatment but this is also rare.

Q3.3: Who cannot get IG?

A3.3: You shouldn't get IG if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction IG or if you have certain antibody deficiencies such as immunoglobulin A deficiency.

Q3.4: Can people who were given IG also get the MMR vaccine?

A3.4: People who receive IG need to wait at least six months to get an MMR vaccine or another live vaccine such as varicella vaccine. This is because the antibodies in IG may interfere with your body's response to later doses of live vaccines. Talk to your health care provider for details.