

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that a student with measles was present at Mabry Middle School on October 31 and November 1. Measles is a highly contagious germ caused by the rubeola virus. The disease is very rare in the United States and the possibility of your student getting this disease is very low. However, we wanted to let you know of the exposure.

Measles begins with fever accompanied by cough, runny nose, and red eyes. Two or three days later, the fever typically peaks, at which time, a red blotchy rash appears, usually first on the face, along the hairline. The rash rapidly spreads to involve the entire body within 24 hours.

Vaccination is the best protection against measles. Children usually receive the first mumps, measles, and rubella vaccine (MMR) at 12-15 month of age and the second dose at 4-6 year of age. If your child has previously been vaccinated against measles or has had the disease, the risks from this exposure are minimal.

Sometimes the shot may not protect persons who have a severe immune system disorder such as HIV/AIDS, persons on chemotherapy, or women who are pregnant. If your child has an immune system disorder, please consult with your healthcare provider immediately and inform him/her of your child's exposure at school.

It is very unlikely that your child will get measles if they have been vaccinated with the MMR vaccine, but if he/she becomes sick with a fever, cough, runny nose or red eyes, with or without rash, before November 22, contact your healthcare provider immediately. At this time, it has been advised that if your child is not vaccinated, he/she should not return back to school until November 25. If your child is up to date on their vaccinations, they are safe to return back to school on Monday.

November 11. If your child becomes ill, we ask that you follow these instructions:

- 1) Please contact your healthcare provider immediately **by phone** and let him or her know that your child was exposed to measles. If you do not have a doctor, you should call the Georgia Department of Public Health Acute Disease Epidemiology Section at 404-657-2588.

- 2) **DO NOT** go to the doctor's office, the hospital, or a public health clinic without **FIRST** calling to let them know about your possible contact with measles on October 31-November 1. Your healthcare provider or public health nurse will advise you about what you should do.
- 3) If you think you might have measles and seek medical attention, have your doctor contact the public health department IMMEDIATELY.
- 4) If you think your child might have measles, keep him/her at home and away from other people, especially babies less than 1 year of age or people with a weakened immune system.
- 5) Do not visit public places!

In collaboration with Cobb & Douglas Public Health, Mabry Middle School will continue to monitor the situation.

Sincerely,

Janet Pak Memark, MD, MPH, FACP

District Health Director Cobb and Douglas Public Health

# Measles (Rubeola) Fact Sheet

## **What is measles?**

Measles (rubeola) is a highly contagious vaccine-preventable disease caused by a virus.

## **How is measles spread?**

Measles is spread by air-borne droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

## **What are the symptoms of measles?**

Measles typically begins with a fever, followed by cough, runny nose, and/or red, watery eyes. After two to three days, the fever peaks and a rash appears at the hairline and spreads progressively downward covering the face, neck, trunk, and extremities.

## **What kind of vaccine is given to prevent measles?**

The MMR vaccine prevents measles and two other viral diseases – mumps and rubella. More than 95% of the people who receive a single dose of MMR will develop immunity to all three viruses. A second dose boosts immunity, typically enhancing protection to 98%.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all persons be routinely vaccinated between 12 and 18 months of age and receive a booster between 4 and 6 years of age.

## **Who is at increased risk of becoming infected with measles?**

- Infants who are too young to have been vaccinated (less than 1 year of age),
- Persons who have never been vaccinated,
- Pregnant women,
- Immunocompromised persons (these include persons undergoing cancer chemotherapy or other immune-suppressive treatments, transplant recipients or those with diseases that affect the immune system such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) or systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

## **What about older persons?**

Persons born before 1957 are generally considered immune because they probably had the disease when they were younger.

**Is it okay to go to public places (i.e. grocery store, work, daycare, school etc.) if I become ill?**

No. If you become ill you should avoid all public places and contact your healthcare provider immediately. **DO NOT** go to the doctor's office, the hospital, or a Public Health clinic without **FIRST** calling to let them know about your possible exposure to measles. Your healthcare or public health nurse will advise you about what you should do.

Please contact the Georgia Department of Public Health immediately at 404-657-2588 should you become ill.