

# MEASLES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## What is measles?

- It is a serious and very contagious illness : just breathing the same air as an infected person is enough to catch measles.
- It can cause serious complications such as an infection of the lungs (pneumonia) or the brain (encephalitis).
- Symptoms can appear 7 to 14 days following exposure to the infection.
- A person is contagious 4 days before and up to 4 days following the appearance of the rash.



## How to know if someone has measles?

- The first symptoms are:
  - high fever;
  - cough;
  - runny nose;
  - red, watery eyes.
- Two to four days later :
  - a red skin rash appears on the face;
  - it spreads further to the rest of the body;
  - it lasts at least 3 days.

Measles usually lasts from 1 to 2 weeks.

## Who is at risk of complications?

- Pregnant women.
- People with a weakened immune system as a result of an illness (e.g.: cancer) or certain medications.
- Children under one year of age.

## How to prevent measles?

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles. This vaccine is part of the routine vaccines administered to babies. It is free and very safe.

You can [make an appointment on the portal Clic Santé](#) or by calling 1 877 644-4545.

To know if you are vaccinated against measles, call 1 877 644-4545.

[See the list of measles vaccine names.](#)

## Is it possible to catch the measles even when vaccinated?

Yes, but it is much rarer than among unvaccinated people. That's why it is important to watch out for symptoms of measles whether the person is vaccinated or not.

## How many doses of vaccine are necessary?

- Person born in 1980 or after : 2 doses.
- Person born between 1970 and 1979: 1 dose. (2 doses for pregnant women exposed to measles and for healthcare workers)
- Person born before 1970: 0 dose, even if they don't remember having had measles.

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## What to do if you think you have measles?

- Stay home as soon as the first symptoms appear: do not wait for the red rash to appear. Do not receive visitors at home.
- Avoid contact with individuals at risk of complications from measles.
- Call Info-santé 8-1-1 before going to a clinic or to the Emergency room.
- If you need to see a doctor before having called Info-Santé:
  - ⇒ When you're making your appointment, tell the reception at the clinic that you might have measles. They will let you know which precautions you need to take.
  - ⇒ Do not take public transport.
  - ⇒ If you have a mask, put it on before leaving your house.
  - ⇒ As soon as you get to the clinic, tell the reception that you might have measles. If you don't have a mask, ask for one and put it on.

Before the red rash appears, people often think they have a simple cold and continue their daily activities, which facilitates transmission to other people.

## Is there a treatment for measles?

There is no specific treatment for measles. Vaccination is the best way to prevent this disease. If you have measles, you should:

- stay home for 4 days after the appearance of the rash. For example, if the rash started on Monday, you can leave the house on Saturday;
- avoid contact with other people;
- get a lot of rest;
- drink a lot of liquids, for example water;
- take medication against fever or malaise, if needed.

## Other questions on measles?

- [Call Info-Santé 811](#)
- [Consult the page measles on Québec.ca](#)
- [Consult the page measles outbreak on Québec.ca](#)

