

## What is it?

- A highly infectious communicable disease caused by the measles virus.
- Complications include diarrhea, pneumonia, blindness, and infections of the brain.
- Pregnant women, infants and individuals with weak immune systems are at higher risk of measles complications.

## What are the symptoms?

- Fever, runny nose (coryza), cough, drowsiness, irritability, and red eyes (conjunctivitis).
- Small white spots (known as “Koplik’s spots”) can appear on the inside of the mouth.
- 3-7 days after the start of symptoms, a red blotchy (maculopapular) rash appears on the face and then progresses down the body.

## How quickly do symptoms develop?

Within 10 days but may be 7-18 days after exposure to onset of fever, usually 14 days until rash appears.

## How is it spread?

The virus is airborne, spread by close personal contact or direct contact with the nose and throat secretions of an infected person. Transmission can occur as a result of the virus remaining in the air or on environmental surfaces for at least two hours.

## How long is it contagious?

Usually 4 days before to 4 days after the onset of rash. Persons with weak immune systems may be contagious for the duration of their illness.

## How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment; however, severe complications can be avoided through good nutrition and adequate fluid intake.

## What can you do?

If you have not had this disease and you were born in 1970 or later, make sure your measles immunization is up to date. Persons born prior to 1970 are assumed to have immunity to measles from natural infection.

## Whom should I talk to if I have any questions?

Infectious Diseases, Algoma Public Health at (705) 942-4646, [www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com), or your health care provider.

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