



# Sarpy/Cass Department of Health & Wellness

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## FACT SHEET

### Measles

Measles is a respiratory disease caused by viruses which normally grow in the cells that line the back of the throat and in the cells that line the lungs.

**Cause:** The measles virus, a member of the genus *Morbillivirus* of the family Paramyxoviridae

**Symptoms:** Rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes (lasts about a week)  
The infected person first experiences a fever lasting about 2 to 4 days that can peak as high as 103 degrees F to 105 degrees F. This is followed by the onset of cough, runny nose, and/or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The rash usually appears about 14 days after exposure and lasts 5 to 6 days. It begins at the hairline, and then involves the face and upper neck. Over the next 3 days, the rash gradually proceeds downward and outward, reaching the hands and feet.

**Spread:** Transmission by coughing and sneezing (highly contagious).

**Incubation:** Symptoms begin to appear about 10 to 12 days after exposure to the virus.

**Precautions:** Airborne for the duration of illness.

**Reportable:** Immediately by the provider or laboratory.

### Diagnosis and Treatment:

Lab tests for measles can be ordered by your physician. There is no specific treatment; those who have measles need to rest, drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated and control fevers. If you think you have measles or believe you/your child has been exposed, call your physician immediately to make arrangements to be seen. DO NOT GO TO THE OFFICE as you could expose others. Children 12 months or older who have not received a measles vaccine should be given a MMR vaccine and the dose repeated 4 weeks after the first dose.

**Prevention:** 1<sup>st</sup> dose of MMR at 12-15months  
2<sup>nd</sup> dose of MMR at 4-6 years  
2<sup>nd</sup> dose can be given 4 weeks after the 1<sup>st</sup> dose

Information obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Control of Communicable Diseases Manual.