

MEASLES FAQ

Protection against measles

Q1: Am I protected against measles?

CDC considers you protected from measles if you have written documentation (records) showing at least **ONE** of the following:

- You received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, and you are:
 - A school-aged child (grades K-12)
 - An adult who will be in a setting that poses a high risk for measles transmission (including students at post-high school education institutions, healthcare personnel, and international travelers)
- You received one dose of measles-containing vaccine, and you are:
 - A preschool-aged child
 - An adult who will not be in a high-risk setting for measles transmission
- A laboratory confirmed that you had measles at some point in your life.
- A laboratory confirmed that you are immune to measles.
- You were born before 1957.

For international travelers, CDC considers you protected from measles if you have written documentation (records) showing at least one of the following:

- You received one dose of measles-containing vaccine, and you are an infant aged 6–11 months.
- You received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, and you are a person 12 months or older.
- A laboratory confirmed that you had measles at some point in your life.
- A laboratory confirmed that you are immune to measles.
- You were born before 1957.

Q2: Do I ever need a booster vaccine?

No. CDC considers people who received two doses of measles vaccine as children according to the U.S. vaccination schedule protected for life, and they do not ever need a booster dose.

If you're not sure whether you are fully vaccinated, talk with your healthcare provider.

Source: U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, March 29). Questions About Measles. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html>

Q3: I am an adult now but only got one dose of measles vaccine as a child. Do I need a second dose?

If you were born after 1957 one dose of measles vaccine is sufficient to be considered protected from measles. Certain adults may need 2 doses. Adults who are going to be in a setting that poses a high risk for measles transmission should make sure they have had two doses separated by at least 28 days. These adults include:

- Students at post-high school education institutions
- Healthcare personnel
- International travelers
- People who public health authorities determine are at increased risk for getting measles during a measles outbreak

If you're not sure whether you are up to date on measles vaccine, talk with your healthcare provider.

Q4: What should I do if I'm unsure whether I'm immune to measles?

If you're unsure whether you're immune to measles, you should first try to [find your vaccination records](#) or documentation of measles immunity. If you do not have written documentation of measles immunity, you should get vaccinated with measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Q5: Do people who got the killed measles vaccine in the 1960's need to be revaccinated with the current, live measles vaccine?

Yes, people who know they got the killed measles vaccine (an earlier formulation of measles vaccine that is no longer used) should talk to their healthcare provider about getting revaccinated with the current, live measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Source: U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, March 29). Questions About Measles. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html>

Measles vaccine

Q1: How effective is the measles vaccine?

The measles vaccine is very effective. Two doses of measles vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus. One dose is about 93% effective.

Q2: How long does it take for the measles vaccine to work in your body?

For the measles vaccine to work, the body needs time to produce protective antibodies in response to the vaccine. Detectable antibodies generally appear within just a few days after vaccination. People are usually fully protected after about 2 or 3 weeks. If you're traveling internationally, make sure to get up to date on all your measles shots. You should plan to be fully vaccinated at least 2 weeks before you depart. If your trip is less than 2 weeks away and you're not protected against measles, you should still get a dose of measles vaccine.

Q3: How does the measles vaccine work?

When you get measles vaccine, your immune system makes protective virus-fighting antibodies against the weakened vaccine virus. Measles vaccine protects you from wild-type measles because if you have been vaccinated and then are exposed to someone with measles, your body remembers how to fight off the wild-type virus. That's because the vaccine trained your immune system.

Q4: Could I still get measles if I am fully vaccinated?

Very few people—about three out of 100—who get two doses of measles vaccine will still get measles if exposed to the virus. Experts aren't sure why. It could be that their immune systems didn't respond as well as they should have to the vaccine. But the good news is, fully vaccinated people who get measles seem more likely to have a milder illness. And fully vaccinated people seem also less likely to spread the disease to other people, including people who can't get vaccinated because they are too young or have weakened immune systems.

Source: U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, March 29). Questions About Measles. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html>

Exposure to measles

Q1: I've been exposed to someone who has measles. What should I do?

Immediately call your healthcare provider and let them know that you have been exposed to someone who has measles. Your healthcare provider can:

- Determine if you are immune to measles based on your vaccination record, age, or laboratory evidence.
- Make special arrangements to evaluate you, if needed, without putting other patients and medical office staff at risk.

If you are not immune to measles, MMR vaccine or a medicine called immune globulin may help reduce your risk developing measles. Your healthcare provider can advise you, and monitor you for signs and symptoms of measles.

If you are not immune and do not get MMR or immune globulin, you should stay away from settings where there are susceptible people (such as schools, hospitals, or childcare) until your healthcare provider says it's okay to return. This will help ensure that you do not spread it to others.

Q2: I think I have measles. What should I do?

Immediately call your healthcare provider and let them know about your symptoms so that they can tell you what to do next. Your healthcare provider can make special arrangements to evaluate you, if needed, without putting other patients and medical office staff at risk.

Q3: My healthcare provider told me that I have measles. What should I do?

If you have measles, you should stay home for four days after you develop the rash. Staying home is an important way to not spread measles to other people. Ask your healthcare provider when it is safe to be around other people again.

You should also:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid sharing drinks or eating utensils.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, tables, and counters. Standard household disinfectants will readily kill the measles virus.
- Call your healthcare provider if you are concerned about your symptoms.

Source: U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, March 29). Questions About Measles. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html>