

## KEY FACTS ABOUT MEASLES

<b>CAUSE</b>	Measles is caused by infection with the measles virus.
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>	Measles is the most contagious disease known to man. Measles is spread by respiratory droplets too small to be seen by the human eye. These droplets are inhaled and the virus attaches to the lining of the airways and begins multiplying--causing disease.
<b>PREVENTION</b>	Measles can only be prevented by vaccination against the virus. The vaccine is safe and effective. Persons who have severe allergic reactions to chicken eggs, who are immunosuppressed, or who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should talk with their physician about the vaccine and whether it is safe to receive it.
<b>POPULATION</b>	<p>Many Americans are at risk of infection from the measles virus. School children, college students, adolescents, young adults, and health care workers are at particular risk of infection. For these individuals, two doses of vaccine are needed to fully protect against the disease.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the death rate among those who contract measles has risen recently in the United States from one in 1,000 cases to 3.2 in 1,000 cases. This higher death rate in people who contract measles seems to be due to infection of very young children who have not received the vaccine and older children and young adults who have not been fully vaccinated.</p> <p>Complications of measles infection such as inflammation of the brain, middle ear infections, and pneumonia can also result in hospitalization and disability.</p>
<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	Measles causes symptoms about 10 days following exposure. Symptoms include high fever, red irritated eyes, runny nose, cough, and a bumpy red rash which usually starts on the head or face and spreads to the trunk and arms.
<b>TREATMENT</b>	There is no definitive treatment for measles. Measles can only be prevented by vaccination.

