

Protecting Your Child from Measles and Other Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Measles cases are on the rise across the country. Learn more about the disease and the actions you can take to protect your child.

The Most Effective Protection from Measles

Measles is a highly contagious disease that anyone can contract, and most commonly affects children.

Vaccination is the most effective way to avoid contracting measles. There are two types of vaccines that can protect your child from measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases: the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine and the measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (MMRV) vaccine.

Children who receive both recommended doses of the MMR or MMRV vaccine are very unlikely to get measles, as the vaccine is about 97% effective.



FACT: Vitamin A does not prevent measles.

Taking large doses of vitamin A may lead to toxicity, which means it can become poisonous. Large doses of vitamin A can also lead to nausea, vomiting, headache, fatigue, joint and bone pain, blurry vision, liver damage, confusion, coma, and other complications. The only way to prevent measles is with the MMR or MMRV vaccine.

Risks of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella cause a range of symptoms that can lead to serious health complications.

- Measles infects the lungs and breathing passages like the nose, mouth, and throat, and spreads throughout the body.
- Mumps and Rubella can both cause swelling of the head and neck, rash, and other symptoms. Mumps and rubella are now extremely rare in the U.S.
- Varicella, or “chickenpox,” causes an itchy rash that lasts about a week. Other common symptoms include fever, fatigue, and loss of appetite.

Certain groups are most at risk for potentially life-threatening complications, including children ages five and under.

The Difference Between the MMR and MMRV Vaccines

The MMR and MMRV vaccines both protect against measles, mumps, and rubella. The MMRV vaccine additionally protects against varicella. The MMRV is only an option for children ages 12 months through 12 years old. Talk to your healthcare professional to determine which vaccine is best for your child.

After two doses of MMR or MMRV, children are considered protected from measles.

When Your Child Should Get the MMR or MMRV Vaccine

Per the [2025 pediatric vaccine schedule](#), children can receive the first dose of the MMR or MMRV vaccine at age 12–15 months and the second dose at age 4–6 years.

Older children, adolescents, and adults who will interact with babies under 12 months of age, or children unable to receive the MMR or MMRV vaccine for other reasons, can help reduce risk by getting vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Note: If you are in a community with a recent measles outbreak, ask your public health department or healthcare professional for the most up-to-date guidance on vaccinating your child.

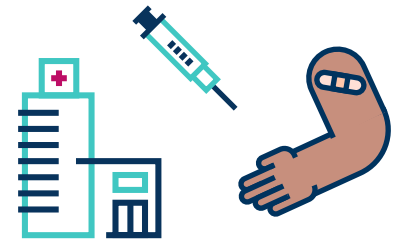
Caring for Your Child After Their MMR or MMRV Vaccine

Most children receive the MMR or MMRV vaccine with no complications. Like many vaccines and medicines, there can still be minor side effects, which typically include:

- Sore arm at the injection site
- Fever
- Mild rash
- Temporary joint pain and stiffness

Side effects from the MMR or MMRV vaccine are much less severe than the symptoms and potential outcomes of a measles infection.

Most temporary, minor side effects can be managed at home with provider-recommended pain relievers, ice packs, and other guidance from a healthcare professional.



Additional Resources

For additional measles guidance, talk to a healthcare provider. You can also learn more about measles transmission, protection, and recovery at [CDC.gov/measles](https://www.cdc.gov/measles).