



Recognise,  
prevent spread,  
and notify

Be vigilant for measles.  
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and can be transmitted easily.

For more information:

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)

# MEASLES

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**Measles starts with cold-like symptoms that develop about 10 days after becoming infected. This is followed a few days later by the measles rash. Patients are infectious from 4 days before to 4 days after rash onset.**

#### How to recognise measles:

- Incubation period 10-12 days after exposure
- Prodrome 2-4 days
  - fever, malaise and loss of appetite
  - cough, coryza (blocked or runny nose), conjunctivitis
  - Koplik spots (rash on mucous membranes)
  - stepwise increase in fever to 39.4°C–40.5°C
- Rash
  - 2-4 days after prodrome, 14 days after exposure
  - persists 5-6 days
  - begins on face and upper neck
  - maculopapular, becomes confluent
  - fades in order of appearance



**Runny or blocked nose (coryza) and red, sore eyes (conjunctivitis)**

#### Koplik spots (appear in first few days of illness, usually last for a few days) small greyish-blue-white spots (often on a reddened background) that occur on the inside of the cheeks early in the 24-48 hours before the rash stage.



**Rash usually starts on head or neck and moves down the body** - patient usually feels very ill during first 1-2 days of rash onset. Rash fades from head to neck



Pictures sourced: CDC Public Health Image Library

#### What to do if you have a suspected case:

**1 Isolate** any person who presents to your surgery/hospital with suspected measles. Measles is highly contagious and can remain active and contagious in the air or on infected surfaces for up to 2 hours after a patient leaves your facility.

#### 2 Get laboratory diagnosis.

- a. An oral fluid swab (ORACOL®) should be sent to the NVRL as soon as possible after the rash onset.
- b. If ORACOL® swabs not available, take a throat swab and serum for antibody testing. Virus can be detected from urine two weeks after rash onset.

**3 Record the date of rash onset** and the vaccination history on the form when sending sample to the laboratory. [https://nvrl.ucd.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/NVRL\\_Oral\\_Fluid\\_Investigation-LFUM001m-4.0-Jan2014.pdf](https://nvrl.ucd.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/NVRL_Oral_Fluid_Investigation-LFUM001m-4.0-Jan2014.pdf)

**4 Contact the Department of Public Health in your region** as soon as possible if you suspect that a person has measles. [http://www.hpsc.ie/NotifiableDiseases/Whotonotify/File\\_13160,en.pdf](http://www.hpsc.ie/NotifiableDiseases/Whotonotify/File_13160,en.pdf) **Do not wait** for lab test results.

**5 If the patient is sent home, advise that the patient should remain at home until at least 4 days after rash onset so as to prevent infection spreading**