

Measles Talking Points
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Nydam/Ryan

Measles

- Measles is a highly contagious, serious respiratory disease that causes a rash and fever
- In rare cases, measles can be deadly

Measles Symptoms

- Fever (can be very high)
- Cough, runny nose, and red eyes
- Tiny white spots inside the mouth on the inner lining of the cheek – also called Koplik's spots
- Rash of tiny, red spots that start at the head and spreads to the rest of the body (spots may become joined together as they spread)

Measles symptoms usually appear within 10 – 14 days after exposure. Measles patients are considered to be contagious anywhere from **4 days before to 4 days after the rash appears**.

Measles can be dangerous, especially for babies and young children. From 2001-2013, 28% of children younger than 5 years old (in the U.S.) who had measles had to be treated in the hospital. In some children, measles can lead to pneumonia, brain damage, deafness, even death.

Measles Transmission

- Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes
- Measles virus can live in the air and on surfaces for 2-3 hours
- Almost everyone who has not been vaccinated for measles will get measles if they are exposed to the virus
- Measles is endemic in many parts of the world and transmission in the U.S. is most often associated with unvaccinated travelers (Americans or foreign visitors) who get measles while they are in other countries

Measles in Georgia

As of February 2015, there has been one reported measles case in Georgia

- 2014 – no cases
- 2013 – no cases

- 2012 – two cases (the second case contracted measles from the first in a healthcare setting)
- 2011 – no cases
- 2010 – one case

Since **2002**, there have been 11 cases of measles in Georgia – all were either imported cases from another country or the patient had contact with an imported case.

Measles Vaccine

- Measles vaccine is one of the most effective vaccines we have – 97%
- Doctors recommend 2 doses of the MMR vaccine for best protection, one dose at each of the following ages:
 - 12 through 15 months
 - 4 through 6 years
- Infants 6 months to 11 months old should have 1 dose of MMR shot before traveling abroad
- Students at post-high school educational institutions who do not have evidence of immunity against measles need two doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days
- Adults who do not have evidence of immunity against measles should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine
- Concerns about a link between the measles vaccine and autism have been scientifically discredited and now at least one autism group is urging vaccination ([Autism Speaks Urges Parents to Vaccinate Children](#), [Vaccines and Autism](#))

Measles Vaccine in Georgia

- In Georgia, 98.3% of children entering kindergarten have received all required vaccinations, including measlesvaccine (MMR)
- Georgia law allows for two types of exemptions from the immunization requirements
 - Medical exemptions are used only when a child has a medical condition that keeps him from being able to receive a specific vaccine(s), not all vaccines
 - Religious exemptions are used when immunizations are against the family's religious beliefs

DPH and Outbreaks in Georgia

For highly infectious, vaccine preventable diseases such as measles or varicella, DPH would, in the situation of an outbreak, request that children who are unprotected (unimmunized) or otherwise at risk (immunocompromised) remain home from school for one incubation period from the date that the last case was identified and exposed

students. DPH, the state health districts and county health departments work closely with schools in the event of any kind of outbreaks.