

Measles Q&A

Because of recent outbreaks of measles in New York City and surrounding areas, Memorial Sloan Kettering is screening patients and visitors to the Pediatric Units for signs and symptoms of measles. We are also asking people if they've had recent contact with someone who has measles. Please understand this is part of our effort to protect our patients. Measles can cause serious illness in a person being treated for cancer.



**MEASLES
WARNING**

Who gets measles?

Anyone can get measles. In the current outbreak in New York, most cases have occurred in people who have not had the vaccine. The vaccine for measles is called MMR.

How is measles spread?

Measles is highly contagious. It is spread through the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The virus remains active and contagious for up to 2 hours, so you can get measles after an infected person has left.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles is a serious respiratory illness. It starts with a fever, runny nose, eye redness, and cough. Three to 5 days after symptoms first appear, a rash of red spots appears on the face and then spreads over the entire body.

Is a person with measles contagious before any symptoms appear?

Yes. A person will start being contagious 4 days before a rash appears. They will stop being contagious 4 days after the rash first appears.

How long does it take to catch measles after an exposure?

Symptoms usually appear 10 to 12 days after exposure to the virus. In some cases, symptoms may start as early as 7 days or as late as 21 days after exposure.

Can the measles vaccine protect my child from catching measles?

In the United States, most people have received 2 MMR vaccines by age 6. However, MMR is a live virus vaccine and is not safe for children being treated for cancer.

Can people who are around my child receive the MMR vaccine?

Yes. Caregivers and household members of children being treated for cancer can safely receive the vaccine. Making sure that everyone around your child is up-to-date with the MMR vaccine is the best way to keep your child safe.

What should I do if my child is exposed to measles?

Tell your child's healthcare team as soon as possible. If your child is exposed to someone with measles, a medicine called immune globulin may be used to prevent infection.

How does MSK protect pediatric patients from measles?

We are screening all patients and visitors to the Pediatric Units for symptoms and possible exposure to measles.

How do I get more information?

Information on areas where recent measles cases have been reported can be found on the Centers for Disease Control website: www.cdc.gov/measles.



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If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact your healthcare team.