

Measles

Agent: Measles virus

Mode of Transmission: Primarily person-to-person transmission by inhalation of respiratory droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people; however, airborne transmission via aerosolized droplet nuclei has been documented.

Signs/Symptoms: Fever, cough, conjunctivitis, coryza, and a typical rash on the third to seventh day after onset of symptoms.

Prevention: Measles vaccine should be given as part of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) series beginning at 12-15 months of age followed by a second dose at age 4-6 years.

Other Important Information: Measles is highly communicable, with secondary attack rates greater than 90% among susceptible people who have close contact with the infected person. Although measles is no longer endemic in the United States, infections acquired in other countries continue to cause transmission after importation. In recent years these import-associated cases have occurred largely among school-aged children who were eligible for vaccination, but whose parents chose not to have them vaccinated.

One case of measles was reported in Virginia during 2009 and occurred in an adult male from the northern region. It is not known how or where the disease was acquired. A single case was also reported in 2008 and that case was linked to international travel. Before 2008, the last reported case in Virginia occurred in 2001.