



Take Care

HEALTHY TIPS
for **SUMMER 2025**

Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of *Take Care!* In this issue, we're sharing important tips on how to protect your child from measles, including answering the question: "Can Vitamin A prevent or cure measles?" You'll also find helpful info on why oral health matters more than you might think, how to keep your kids safe in the sun. We hope you enjoy a safe summer and take care!



How to Protect Your Children During a Measles Outbreak

Recent measles outbreaks have many families concerned. Most people who have gotten sick were not vaccinated against measles. This is a stark reminder of the importance of making sure your children are fully vaccinated.

Here are answers to questions many parents have about the ongoing measles outbreaks and step you can take to protect your family.

I thought measles was a mild illness, so why the alarm now?

Measles was once a common childhood disease, almost an expected part of growing up. While most children recovered from the measles without problems, many others did not. In some children, the infection caused pneumonia and in a few, encephalitis (infection of the brain) and even death.

Before the measles vaccine was available in the U.S., each year an average of 450 people died from measles; most of them were previously healthy children. Thanks to the measles vaccine, we can now protect children from the measles. In recent years, however, some parents have refused or delayed vaccinating their children out of fear or misinformation about the safety of the measles vaccine. This means there are more unvaccinated children, teens and adults in our communities.

Current U.S. measles outbreaks

There are at least 14 U.S. measles outbreaks and more than 1,080 confirmed cases across 32 states so far in 2025. This includes Texas, where 2 unvaccinated school-age children have died from measles. Neither child had underlying medical conditions reported.

Vaccination recommendations in outbreak areas

Additional or early vaccination may be recommended in areas where measles continues to spread. For example, health departments may recommend a second dose for children age 1 to 4

The Children's Health Foundation is a non-profit organization that partners with your Pediatrician to develop quality health care programs in our community. We work together to foster the highest quality care for children, to raise awareness on health issues, and to achieve better children's health outcomes. Please ask your provider for more information.

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years who received one dose and live in or plan to travel to the outbreak area. An early dose may be recommended for infants age 6 through 11 months living in or traveling to outbreak areas. Children who have not received any MMR vaccine may need two doses 28 days apart. Check recommendations from your state or local health department.

Choosing to not vaccinate your children not only leaves them susceptible to measles, but also exposes other children to measles. This includes infants who are too young to be vaccinated and those who are unable to be vaccinated due to other health conditions. (See “Should children who have not had a measles vaccine go to school during an outbreak?”)

How is measles spread?

The measles virus spreads easily through the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs and someone nearby inhales the infected droplets. It can also be transmitted by direct contact with fluids from the nose or mouth of an infected person.

How long can the measles virus live on surfaces?

Measles is one of the most contagious infectious diseases known. The virus can live for up to 2 hours in the air where infected people have coughed or sneezed, or on surfaces they may have touched. As a result, anyone in crowded, public spaces may come into contact with measles.

What are the signs & symptoms of measles?

The most recognizable measles symptom is a **very high fever accompanied by a red or brownish blotchy rash**, although this is not the only symptom.

Before the rash appears, children with measles develop cold-like symptoms, including:

- Cough
- Runny nose
- Fever
- Red, watery eyes

These symptoms tend to get worse during the first 1 to 3 days of the illness.



When do children need to get the measles vaccine?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians all recommend children receive the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine at age 12-15 months, and again at 4-6 years. Children can receive the second dose earlier if it is at least 28 days after the first dose.

There is a combination vaccine called MMRV that contains both chickenpox and MMR vaccines. MMRV is an option for some children 12 months through 12 years of age.

What if my baby is too young for the measles vaccine?

High immunization rates in a community protects those who are too young to be vaccinated, including infants under 12 months of age. These infants are at the highest risk of serious illness, hospitalization, and death due to measles. Find information on vaccines for infants age 6-12 months old during an outbreak or before international travel to a location with an active measles outbreak.

Is the measles vaccine safe?

Yes. Occasional side effects of the measles vaccine include fever, tenderness at the injection site and rash. Rare side effects include a temporary decrease in blood platelets. The measles vaccine does not cause autism. Getting the measles vaccine is much safer than getting the measles infection.

How long does the measles vaccine provide protection?

The measles vaccine is very effective in protecting against measles. However, no vaccine is 100% protective so very rarely, people who are vaccinated may develop measles. About 95 of every 100 people will be protected after getting one dose of the MMR vaccine. Two doses of MMR protect 97-99 of every 100 people.

I'm not sure if I've received measles vaccine. Do I need a booster?

If you are not sure if you or your children have been fully vaccinated against measles, talk with your doctor to see if anyone in your family needs to be vaccinated. There is no risk to receiving measles vaccine if you have been immunized before. Measles is a live vaccine so children with immune problems or receiving medications that suppress the immune system should not receive the measles vaccine. Your pediatrician is your best source of advice on vaccinations.

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Photo credit: CDC



Measles Q&A

James D. Campbell, MD, MS, FAAP



Can vitamin A prevent or cure measles?

No, vitamin A does not prevent or cure measles. And it's important to know that too much vitamin A can cause serious health problems.

Parents may be wondering how to prevent measles after hearing about recent outbreaks and the death of two unvaccinated school-age children in Texas. The best way to protect your family is by choosing to have your child immunized against measles. (See "Does measles affect your immune system?" and "How to Protect Your Children During a Measles Outbreak.")

Vitamin A treatment for measles can only help if a child is already sick. It doesn't help when used instead of the vaccine. Here is what to know about vitamin A and measles.

Is too much vitamin A harmful?

Yes, large doses of vitamin A can be toxic and make your child sick. Too much vitamin A causes nausea, vomiting, headache, tiredness, joint and bone pain, blurry vision, skin and hair problems. It can also lead to serious problems like high pressure inside the skull that pushes on the brain, liver damage and coma. If you are pregnant, taking large doses of vitamin A can cause birth defects.

Most children get enough vitamin A in their diet from foods like eggs, milk, cheese, cereal, leafy green vegetables, orange vegetables, fish and meat. Infants get vitamin A from breast milk. It is also in infant formula.

Talk with your pediatrician before giving a vitamin supplement to your child. Some parents choose to give their children over-the-counter multivitamins that include vitamin A and have been tested and approved for safe use in children. The dose of vitamin A in a children's multivitamin is much lower than the doses that are recommended for treating measles with vitamin A.

When to get the measles vaccine

Large measles outbreaks occur when people are not fully vaccinated. Recently, childhood immunization rates have gone down. This has made it easier for measles to spread.

Getting the measles vaccine is the best way to protect your child from getting measles. If you are not sure if your child needs to get the vaccine, check with your pediatrician. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all children get the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two doses are 97% effective at preventing measles illness.

- First dose at age 12-15 months old
- Second dose at age 4-6 years old

Why is vitamin A treatment used for children who have measles?

If your child has measles, your doctor can give two doses of vitamin A, 24 hours apart, to treat vitamin A deficiency caused by measles. It is given for just 2 days and does not cure the infection. But the vitamin A measles treatment may help to prevent the illness from becoming more severe.

During a measles infection, the virus depletes vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A deficiency can cause eye damage and blindness. When the body doesn't have enough vitamin A, it may also increase the risk of serious illness and death from measles.

If your child does not have measles, you should not give vitamin A to your child in the hopes of preventing the disease. There is no dose of vitamin A that will protect them or anyone else in your family from being infected with measles.

What about cod liver oil?

Cod liver oil has high amounts of vitamin A, much higher than the recommended daily amounts. It also can make kids sick if they take too much. In addition to vitamin A, cod liver oil is high in vitamin D—another nutrient that can be harmful if kids take more than the recommended daily amount. Plus, cod liver oil also contains "fatty acids" that can keep blood from clotting. This can increase the chance of bleeding.

Budesonide & clarithromycin: other unproven, risky measles "cures"

You may also have heard claims that inhaled budesonide, a steroid, and clarithromycin, an antibiotic, cure measles. As with vitamin A and cod liver oil, these claims are misleading and potentially harmful.

Antibiotics can kill bacteria, but not viruses. Since measles is a virus, clarithromycin does nothing to stop it. Taking an antibiotic unnecessarily increases the risk of antibacterial resistance, making the drug less effective when it really is needed.

Inhaled budesonide is an asthma medicine; it is not effective to treat measles. In fact, steroids given early in an infection like measles can interfere with the immune system's ability to fight the virus.

During a measles outbreak

If you live in an area with an outbreak or plan to travel outside the U.S., your baby can get the vaccine sooner if they are at least 6 months old. Also, in areas with outbreaks, it may be recommended that children who have received their first dose receive their second dose before age 4-6 years. Check with your pediatrician to learn more.

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Easy Strawberry Popsicles with Greek Frozen Yogurt



Ingredients:

- 12 oz. plain Greek yogurt (2% or 4% milk fat; 2–6-oz. containers)
- 1/4 cup honey or maple syrup
- 2 cups diced strawberries (stems removed) fresh or frozen
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor or blender and grind until well combined, about 10 seconds, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl as necessary. Taste and adjust sweetness if needed.
2. Divide the yogurt mixture evenly among reusable popsicle molds.
3. Freeze for at least 4 hours or overnight before serving. Run popsicle molds under warm water briefly to help loosen. Serve.
4. Store any remaining pops in a freezer bag with as much air removed as possible for up to 3 months.

Recipe Courtesy of Amy Palanjan yummyslstory.com.

Sun Safety

What you wear can protect you

Hats to protect the face, ears and neck

Sunglasses to protect the eyes. Look for youth-sized sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection

Choose cool, comfortable clothing that covers the body for additional protection



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