

# Understanding measles

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## Introduction

Measles is a very serious and contagious illness. The measles virus can spread through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. Symptoms include cough, fever, runny nose and inflamed eyes, as well as a red rash that appears on the face, neck, arms and legs.

Because of immunization, measles is now a rare disease in Canada. However, measles is still common in other parts of the world, and it is possible for cases to occur in Canada. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against measles. When you get immunized, you help protect others as well. The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your health care provider to make an appointment. If you are travelling to a country where measles is common, you can be vaccinated through a travel health clinic. To find a travel health clinic near you, visit the [HealthLink BC Directory](#).

For more information about measles and vaccinations, click the links below. If you have more questions, call **8-1-1**.

## Featured topics

### Measles

Learn how measles spreads and what the symptoms are. Find out what to do if you think you have measles, and how to prevent spreading measles to others.

- [Measles \(HealthLinkBC File #14b\)](#)
- [Measles \(rubeola\)](#)
- [Measles rash](#)

### Measles vaccines

The vaccines that protect against the measles are part of your child's routine immunizations. Learn when your child should be immunized, the benefits of immunization and more.

- [Measles, mumps, rubella \(MMR\) vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #14a\)](#)
- [Measles, mumps, rubella and varicella \(MMRV\) vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #14e\)](#)

### Immunization

Getting immunized is the best way to protect you and your family from serious and sometimes deadly diseases. When you get immunized, you help protect others as well. Learn more about immunization in British Columbia by visiting our [Vaccinations Health Feature](#).

- [A better immunization experience for your child \(HealthLinkBC File #50e\)](#)

- [B.C. immunization schedules](#)
- [Childhood vaccines are safe \(HealthLinkBC File #50c\)](#)
- [The benefits of immunizing your child \(HealthLinkBC File #50b\)](#)
- [Your baby's immune system and vaccines \(HealthLinkBC File #50a\)](#)

## **New to Canada**

If you've just moved to Canada, it's important to make sure you have received all the vaccines recommended for children and adults in B.C. These vaccines might be different from those recommended in your home country. If you are missing any recommended vaccines, you can receive these missing routine vaccines for free.

## **Pregnancy**

Women should avoid becoming pregnant for one month after getting the vaccine. MMR is a live vaccine, so it is not recommended that pregnant women be vaccinated for measles until after they give birth. Everyone within the same household should be up to date on vaccinations to protect you and your baby.

If you are breastfeeding or chest feeding, the MMR vaccine is safe for you and the baby.

## **Travel health**

Getting immunized should be an important part of your travel plans. Learn more about immunization in British Columbia by visiting our [Vaccinations Health Feature](#). For information on vaccines related to travelling outside of Canada, please visit:

- [Health advice for travellers \(HealthLinkBC File #41a\)](#)
- [Travel health](#)
- [Travel immunizations for adults \(HealthLinkBC File #41c\)](#)
- [Travelling with children \(HealthLinkBC File #41d\)](#)
- [Travel health notices](#)

Some health authorities provide information about measles and immunizations. See the links below.

- [Fraser Health: Measles](#)
- [Interior Health: Get Immunized](#)
- [Northern Health: Measles](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health: Measles](#)

You can receive the measles vaccine from your local public health unit, community health centre, at primary care homes, doctor's offices, travel health clinics and pharmacies (for those 4 years of age and older).

To receive vaccines related to travel, contact a [travel health clinic](#). It is recommended that you phone ahead to assure that they have vaccine in stock.