



QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MEASLES NEWS?

Dear CVP Patients and Families,

We are aware of the recent news regarding the increase in measles cases in the United States. We have received many calls over the last few weeks with questions about what can be done to better protect our children from the recent spread of measles. Here are some helpful tips for protecting your children:

What is Measles?

Measles is a viral infection that spreads easily through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. It can also spread by touching contaminated surfaces. Measles is so contagious that up to 90% of unvaccinated people exposed to the virus will become infected.

Why is Measles Dangerous?

While some children recover from measles without complications, others can experience serious problems, including pneumonia, encephalitis, ear infections, and hospitalizations. Children under 5 years old, unvaccinated individuals, and those with weakened immune systems are at the highest risk for severe complications.

What are the Symptoms of Measles?

Measles symptoms typically appear 7-14 days after exposure. Watch for:

- **High fever** (may spike to over 104 degrees Fahrenheit)
- **The "3 Cs"**: cough, coryza (runny nose), and conjunctivitis (red, watery eyes)
- **Rash**: A red blotchy rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body, usually 3 days after the fever begins
- **Koplik spots**: Small white spots inside of the mouth (may appear before the rash)

How Can I Protect My Child?

Vaccination is the best defense against measles. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe, effective, and recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

MMR Vaccine Schedule

- **First Dose**: 12-15 months of age
- **Second Dose**: 4-6 years of age (before starting school)

Important Notes:

- The MMR vaccine is 97% effective at preventing measles after two doses.
- Children too young to be vaccinated (under 12 months) or those with certain medical conditions rely on “herd immunity” - when most people in the community are vaccinated, it helps protect everybody.
- If you are planning international travel, your child may need the MMR vaccine earlier than 12 months of age. Talk to us before your trip.

Is the MMR Vaccine Safe?

Yes! The MMR vaccine has been thoroughly studied and is not linked to autism or other serious side effects. Mild side effects, such as low-grade fever or rash, may occur but are temporary.

What do I do if My Child is Exposed to Measles?

If your child is directly exposed to a known measles case and is unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated:

- a. Call our office immediately for guidance.
- b. The MMR vaccine may prevent measles if given within 72 hours of exposure.
- c. If the vaccine cannot be given, a medication called immune globulin (IG) may be recommended within 6 days of exposure to reduce the severity of the illness.
- d. Watch for symptoms and keep your child away from others to prevent spreading the virus.

Measles is Preventable – Let’s Work Together!

Measles cases are on the rise in the United States and around the world, often due to vaccine hesitation. By vaccinating your child, you are not only protecting them but also helping to keep our community safe.

If you have any further questions about measles, the MMR vaccine, or your child’s vaccination status, please do not hesitate to contact us at 405-577-6700. We are here to help!

Sincerely,

Dr. Dina Bowen, M.D.