Measles : Family Guidance & FAQ

What to Do If You Suspect Measles

• **Stay Home & Isolate:** Isolate immediately; Keep your child at home and away from public settings, school, daycare, unimmunized/underimmunized family members, pregnant, or immunocompromised.

• **Call the Clinic First:** Contact our office via portal messaging or phone call if suspected contact/symptoms occur. We will evaluate your child's symptoms and collaborate on next steps for your child and family. If instructed to come in, please ensure anyone over 2 years old wears a well-fitting mask.

• **How will my child be examined if they need to be seen?**

- **Stay parked:** We will ask you to remain in your vehicle when you arrive.
- **Car assessment:** A provider will come out to the parking lot to examine your child, and collect any swabs necessary.

Why do we need to stay in the car?

- **High contagion:** Measles spreads very easily through the air in enclosed spaces.
- **Protection:** This step keeps other children, babies, immunocompromised individuals, and staff safe from exposure.
- **Clean air:** It prevents us from having to close down indoor waiting rooms.

• **Manage Symptoms:** Focus on rest, plenty of fluids, and comfort. Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for high fevers if your child is uncomfortable. **Never** give aspirin to children due to the risk of Reye's syndrome.

Timeline and Transmission Measles

Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can linger in the air for up to two hours after the person has left the room.

• **Contagious Window:** Children can spread measles for 4 days before the rash appears until 4 days after it breaks out.

• **Incubation Period:** Symptoms usually appear 7 to 14 days after exposure, but can take up to 21 days.

Recognizing Measles Symptoms

Symptoms typically show up 7 to 14 days after exposure and develop in distinct stages:

• **Days 1–3 (Early Signs):** High fever (often >101°F/38.3°C), cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes.

• **Days 2–3 (Mouth Spots):** Tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the cheeks.

• **Days 3–5 (The Rash):** A flat, red, blotchy rash breaks out at the hairline, spreads downward over the face and neck, and moves down to the trunk, arms, and legs. Fever often spikes higher when the rash appears.

Go to the nearest ER immediately if your child displays any of these warning signs
(inform the ER registration staff of suspected measles before entering)

• Difficulty breathing, rapid breathing, or grunting noises.

• Extreme lethargy, confusion, or inability to wake up fully.

• Severe, persistent vomiting or signs of deep dehydration (no tears, no wet diapers for 8+ hours).

• Uncontrollable high fever that does not respond to medication. (See our medication dosing sheet for dosing instructions)