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FACTS...

Sedgwick County Health Department

June 2007

Measles

What is measles (Rubeola)?

Measles is a highly communicable, vaccine-preventable disease.

What are symptoms of measles?

Symptoms generally begin with a fever, red watery eyes, runny nose, cough, and small red spots with bluish white centers on the inside of the cheeks. A characteristic red, blotchy rash appears around the third day of illness, beginning on the face. Measles is frequently complicated by middle ear infection or diarrhea, and the disease can become severe leading to swelling of the brain.

How soon do symptoms appear after infection occurs?

Symptoms begin to appear about 10-12 days after exposure to the virus. The infected person first experiences a fever lasting about 2-4 days that can peak as high as 103-105° F. This is followed by the onset of cough, runny nose, and/or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The rash usually appears about 14 days after exposure and lasts 5-6 days. Over the next 3 days, the rash gradually proceeds downward and outward, reaching the hands and feet.

How long are measles contagious?

Infected people are usually contagious from about four days before their rash starts to four days afterwards.

How can I get more information on Measles?

For more information on measles, or any other health issues, call the Sedgwick County Health Department at 660-7300.

Or visit the Sedgwick County website at:
www.sedgwickcounty.org

Who should get the measles (MMR) vaccine and when is it recommended?

- First dose of MMR is recommended at 12-15 months of age.
- Second dose of MMR is recommended at 4 to 6 years of age.
- Persons born before 1957 are considered immune.
- Persons born in or after 1957 who have not had the disease should have two doses of vaccine.
- Adults and children can receive the MMR vaccine.

How is measles spread?

The virus resides in the mucus in the nose and throat of the infected person. When that person sneezes or coughs, droplets spray into the air. The infected mucus can land in other people's noses or throats when they breathe or put their fingers in their mouth or nose after handling an infected surface.

How is measles treated?

Because measles is caused by a virus, there is not a prescription treatment available. Rest and time will cure most infected persons.

How can I prevent the measles?

The best way to prevent measles is to be vaccinated against it. Measles vaccine can be obtained from the Sedgwick County Health Department.

Transmission of illness can be reduced by:

- Good hand-washing habits
- Avoiding sharing drinking and eating utensils



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