



Measles: Pearls for EMS Clinicians

As of February 27, 2025, a total of 164 measles cases were reported by 9 states: Alaska, California, Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island and Texas. CDC reports there have been three outbreaks (defined as 3 or more related cases) in 2025, and 93% of cases are outbreak-associated. While there have been sporadic cases in Maryland over the past 5 years, MIEMSS urges prehospital clinicians to consider the potential for measles infection in their patients, while using the criteria to the right as a reference. While treating patients suspected of having measles, EMS clinicians should follow State EMS and appropriate infection control protocols, and appropriate PPE should be donned immediately, and the receiving hospital should be contacted via EMRC to may prepare for the incoming patient.

PPE Recommendations: Immediately after measles is suspected, providers should don gloves, gowns, eye protection, and N-95 or equivalent respirators.

Who: Although ANY individual can present with the symptoms of measles, the following are at a higher risk for severe complications:

- Infants & children aged less than 5 years
- Adults aged greater than 20 years
- Pregnant women
- People with compromised immune systems, such as patients with leukemia and HIV infections

What: Measles is an acute viral respiratory illness. It has an incubation period of 10 to 12 days. It initially presents with a very high fever (103° F or higher), along with ALL of the following:


- Cough
- Coryza (Stuffy & Runny Nose)
- Conjunctivitis

The typical rash appears approximately 14 days after the patient is exposed, and the patient is contagious from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash appears.

When: Infection transmission can occur via direct contact with an infected individual or by airborne particles expired when an infected patient breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Measles virus can remain infectious in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves the area.


Where: Although recent outbreaks have occurred in other states, sporadic measles cases have also been documented in Maryland within the past five years.

Why: Measles is an incredibly infectious and deadly disease that can spread quickly and can be potentially deadly if not recognized early.



CONSIDER MEASLES

in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible measles symptoms (cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis)



Ask patients about recent travel internationally or to domestic venues frequented by international travelers, as well as a history of measles in the community.

MEASLES

is highly contagious and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.



It is so contagious that if one person has it, 9 out of 10 people of all ages around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected.



Do you know CDC's Guidelines for Patient Evaluation, Diagnosis & Management?

www.cdc.gov/measles/HCP/



THINK MEASLES