

Measles: Pearls for the Prehospital Clinician

Mustafa M. Sidik

EMS Infectious Disease Program

Due to the recent outbreaks of measles in the New York and New Jersey areas, as well as in other regions of the country, 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. If a patient is suspected of having measles, appropriate PPE should be donned immediately, and the receiving hospital should be contacted via EMRC so that they 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 breaths, 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 most recently occurred in New York and New Jersey, sporadic measles cases have also been documented in the past in other states, including Maryland.

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

