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Stopping the Measles Outbreak Starts with Vaccination

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The measles outbreak in west Texas is growing rapidly, and with kindergarten vaccination rates dipping, more communities may be at risk of outbreaks. But it is not just kids who should be vaccinated, some adults may need a booster too.

Measles is one of the world's most contagious diseases. The virus spreads through the air when someone who has been infected coughs or sneezes. While symptoms may not appear until 10-14 days, they include high fever, runny nose, red and watery eyes, cough, rash, and small white spots inside the cheeks. This virus can survive in the air for up to two hours - a person can catch measles even after an infected person has left a room. There is no specific antiviral treatment for measles so focusing on managing symptoms while the virus runs its course is best. Make sure you are getting plenty of rest, stay home, stay hydrated, and eat a healthy diet to feel better faster. Measles can cause serious health complications, especially in children younger than 5 years of age.

The best defense against measles is vaccination. The vast majority of people getting sick are unvaccinated, and the measles vaccine is safe and highly effective.

If you have been vaccinated with two doses of vaccine you have a 95%-plus chance of being completely protected throughout your life, but there are some adults who should consider getting another measles shot.

People who were vaccinated before 1968 received a killed version of the vaccine which didn't work very well: they should be revaccinated.



If you're not sure of your vaccination status, there's no harm in getting another shot. You will boost your immunity to not only measles, but German measles and mumps because all of those three are in one vaccine.

If you were vaccinated between 1968 and 1989, you likely received just one dose instead of the two that are standard today. In most cases, that one dose is considered enough protection, but there are exceptions.

If you're traveling somewhere where there's an active outbreak and you're not sure that you got two doses, it's important to get a second dose. If you live in a place that's experiencing an outbreak, we recommend a second dose for adults. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your children.

