

WHAT ARE MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA?

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly contagious viral diseases that have the potential to be very serious. They can be spread from infected people through the air.

The **MEASLES VIRUS** causes fever, cough, runny nose, pink eye and rash. If the measles virus infects the lungs, it can cause pneumonia. Some older children infected with the virus will suffer from brain inflammation, which can cause seizures and permanent brain damage.

The **MUMPS VIRUS** usually causes fever, headache and swollen glands. It can lead to deafness, meningitis, painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries and in some cases, death.

RUBELLA, also known as German measles, causes rash, low-grade fever and arthritis. If a pregnant woman gets rubella, she could miscarry or give birth to a baby with serious birth defects.

WHAT IS THE MMR VACCINE?

The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is a recommended childhood vaccine. This three-in-one vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella and is required for children to enter school in most states. Children need two doses of the vaccine, while adults who need it should get at least one dose.

WHO SHOULD GET THE MMR VACCINE?

Children should get the first dose of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. Children can get the second dose at any age, as long as it is at least 28 days after the first dose.

Adults who have not been vaccinated nor had the diseases, or don't know if they've been vaccinated or had the diseases, and who meet any of the following criteria:

- Adults born after 1956.
- Work in a medical facility.

IS THE MMR VACCINE SAFE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN?

Pregnant women should wait to get their MMR vaccine until after they have given birth. Women should avoid getting pregnant for four weeks after getting the MMR vaccine.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE MMR VACCINE?

Mild-to-moderate problems: Fever, rash and seizures, swollen glands in the cheeks or neck, temporary pain and stiffness in the joints, temporary low blood platelet count.

Severe problems (rare): deafness, permanent brain damage.

Serious allergic reactions with symptoms including: difficulty breathing, wheezing, hives, pale skin, fast heartbeat, dizziness.

REFERENCES

Hamborsky J, Kroger A, Wolfe S, eds. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. 13th ed. Washington, DC: Public Health Foundation, 2015.

Vaccine Information Statement: *MMR (Measles, Mumps, & Rubella) Vaccine (What You Need to Know)* April 20, 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mmr.html>. Accessed April 2016.