

# MEASLES

## *Resurgence of a Preventable Disease*



### What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. One person with measles can infect 12 to 18 other people. It mostly affects young children, but it is **HIGHLY PREVENTABLE** with vaccines. While most children have uncomplicated measles, around 10% to 40% have complications like ear infection, pneumonia, or other respiratory infections.

### HOW DO YOU GET MEASLES?

Measles is an airborne disease. People in low-income countries, especially children, are at highest risk for measles. It can be devastating when combined with malnutrition or malaria.



### CAN MEASLES KILL YOU?

Measles can be very severe, even fatal, for children under the age of five, especially those living in crowded places, or those who are malnourished or HIV-positive. In one in every 1,000 cases, a child will have encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. In low-income countries, around 3% to 6% of cases end in death, with the mortality rate going as high as 30%.



### HOW CAN YOU PREVENT OR TREAT MEASLES?

There is no medicine or treatment made specifically to treat measles. Patients usually take paracetamol for headaches, and ointment for eye infections. You only need antibiotics if there are secondary bacterial infections, like pneumonia or an ear infection. What's important is preventing complications and treating symptoms.

The best way to prevent measles is through vaccination. Most children are given the combined measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. It is recommended for all children to receive two doses of the MMR vaccine. If you do get measles and you recover, you will have antibodies that will make you immune from the virus.



### WHAT IS DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS DOING ABOUT MEASLES?



Doctors Without Borders has vaccinated some 28 million children against measles since 2006, and conducts vaccination campaigns every year, in a wide range of countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic.

Doctors Without Borders also works to address measles outbreaks in Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Bangladesh. Outbreaks happen in places with weak public vaccination systems and low vaccination coverage, including in areas of conflict and among high numbers of people living in close quarters, such as refugee camps.

