

Vaccines are the best way to prevent measles and rubella

Please vaccinate your child against measles and rubella!



Measles and rubella are highly contagious viral diseases that spread widely in metropolitan areas where many people come into contact with others. In recent years, there are cases where people will contract measles while overseas, then have symptoms appear after coming back to Japan and spread the disease to others. Patients stricken with measles have rapidly increased in the short period between August and September last year. There was also a large rubella epidemic from 2012 to 2013, so full attention should be given to the prevention of such diseases. In 2016, 1 in 5 measles patients and 1 in 5 rubella patients were under the age of 10. Most patients were not vaccinated against the diseases.

There is no special treatment for either measles or rubella, but vaccines are very effective. If you are not immune to the disease and you come into contact with an infected person, you have a very high chance of becoming infected. You will need 2 doses of the vaccine to become immune to the diseases.

Eligible persons who can receive the vaccine free of charge:

1st Dose: 12 to 24 months (Until the day before the 2nd birthday)



A vaccine as a present for your child's 1st birthday

We recommend your child get vaccinated as soon as possible because the immunity they get from their mothers diminishes after their first birthday.



2nd Dose: The year before entering elementary school (April 1st to March 31st)

"But why does my child need 2 doses?"

1. Immunity may not develop or continue after only 1 dose.
2. 98 to 99% of children show immunity to both measles and rubella after 2 doses.
3. You may develop other complications if infected with measles.
4. If a woman gets rubella while pregnant, the newborn may get congenital rubella syndrome.
5. When pursuing higher education and employment, you may be asked about your vaccination history for measles.



After April 1st, get your 2nd dose as soon as possible! You can get them for free until March 31st of the next year.



If you miss these two periods, you must schedule your child's vaccination on your own and pay costs in full (about 10,000 yen).

Number of Days between 1st and 2nd Doses

If you receive a live, attenuated vaccine (MR, chicken pox), please get your 2nd dose at least 27 days after the 1st one. If you receive an inactivated vaccine (Japanese encephalitis, influenza), please get your 2nd dose at least 6 days after your 1st one.

Side Effects of the Vaccine

You may develop a fever (13%) or rash (3%) within 2 weeks of your first vaccine, which will usually go away between 1 to 3 days. Chances of getting a fever or rash are lower after getting your second vaccine. In rare cases, there may be encephalitis or encephalopathy (1 in 1-1.5 million).

What is measles?

In the past, it was known as a fatal disease.

As it is highly contagious, many people will be infected if not vaccinated properly. Since it takes as long as 7 to 10 days to recover after being infected, it is very physically taxing, and 1 in 10 people will be hospitalized due to other complications. The goal is to eradicate this disease across the globe.



How does the infection spread and what is the incubation period?

The measles virus is spread through airborne, droplet, or contact transmissions, which include coughing and sneezing. The incubation period (the period of time before symptoms first appear) is approximately 10 to 12 days.

◆ What are the symptoms?

Main symptoms include fever, coughing, runny nose, bloodshot eyes, and a rash. The fever will be 38°C for the first 3 to 4 days, and after a temporary drop in temperature, another high fever and rash will develop. The fever and rash will subside after 3 to 4 days.

◆ What are possible complications?

Complications include bronchitis, middle ear infection, pneumonia and encephalitis. Out of 100 measles patients, 5 to 15 get middle ear infections, and 1 out of 1000 get encephalitis. Anytime between a few to 10 years after getting measles, about 1 in 100,000 will develop subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), which is a type of chronic encephalitis. About 1 in every thousand will die from measles. *You will not have these complications if you are vaccinated.



What is rubella?

It is also known as “Three-Day Measles” because the fever and rash go away after three days.

If a woman gets rubella in the early stages of her pregnancy, she has an increased risk of giving birth to a baby with congenital rubella syndrome (which includes congenital heart disease, cataracts, and hearing difficulties). Since women cannot be vaccinated while pregnant, they must receive vaccination before pregnancy. Men should also receive vaccination to prevent spreading rubella to pregnant women around them.



◆ How does the infection spread and what is the incubation period?

Droplet transmission such as coughing or sneezing will spread the virus. The incubation period is 14 to 21 days.

◆ What are the symptoms?

Main symptoms include rash (more pale in color compared to measles), fever, and swelling of lymph nodes behind the neck. Others include coughing, runny nose, and bloodshot eyes.

◆ What are possible complications?

Joint pain, Thrombocytopenic Purpura, and encephalitis have been reported. In rubella patients, about 1 out of 3,000 will get Thrombocytopenic Purpura, and 1 out of 6,000 will get encephalitis. Complications tend to be more serious in adults compared to children.

Contact Information:

Health and Welfare Centers (Each Ward)

Infectious Diseases Department, Public Health Office, City of Osaka TEL: 06-6647-0656 April 2017