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Measles, Mumps and Rubella



**養和家庭醫學及
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Measles

Causative Agent

Measles is caused by a virus called Measles virus.

Mode of Transmission

As one of the most communicable infectious diseases, measles is transmitted airborne by droplet spread or by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected individuals. A patient can get infected by another from 4 days before to 4 days after rash appears. Incubation usually lasts from 7 to 18 days, or even 21 days.



Clinical Features

First presented with fever, cough, running nose, red eyes and white spots inside the mouth, one will have red blotchy skin rash 3 to 7 days after onset, starting from the face to the rest of the body. Skin rash usually lasts 4 to 7 days, or even up to 3 weeks, causing brownish spots and sometimes fine skin peeling. In severe cases, the respiratory system, digestive tract and brain can also get infected and lead to serious consequences, sometimes fatal.

Measles infection during pregnancy can cause adverse outcomes, including pregnancy loss, preterm birth, and low birth weight, but there is no evidence to suggest an increased risk of congenital defects by measles. If mothers have measles shortly before pregnancy, the neonates are at increased risk of subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, which is a very rare but fatal disease of the central nervous system, in later life.

Treatment

If infected, avoid contact with non-immune individuals, especially pregnant women with a weakened immune system and infants below one year of age. In the absence of specific treatment for measles, drugs may be prescribed for symptom relief, such as antibiotics for bacterial complications.

Mumps

Causative Agent

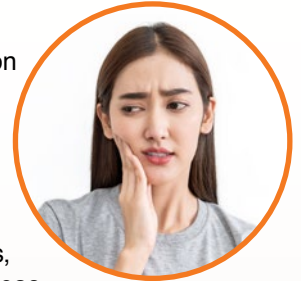
Mumps is caused by the Mumps virus. It affects the salivary glands and nerve tissues sometimes.

Mode of Transmission

Mumps is spread by way of droplet and direct contact with the saliva of the infected. Mumps can be transmitted from the infected to non-immune individuals from 2 days before overt swelling of salivary glands to 5 days after swelling. The incubation period lasts 12 to 25 days, usually 18 days.

Clinical Features

All ages are susceptible to mumps, and are more common in children over one year of age. Mumps is characterised by painful swelling of the salivary glands, usually at the cheeks. Other possible complications include deafness, or infection of the brain, pancreas, testicles or ovaries.



Treatment

No specific treatment is now available. Drugs may be prescribed to reduce discomfort.

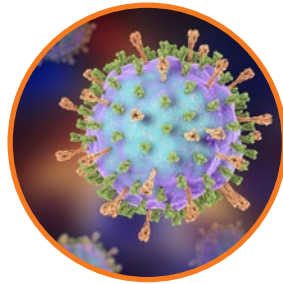
Rubella

Causative Agent

Also known as “German Measles”, rubella is caused by rubella virus.

Mode of Transmission

The transmission route of rubella is via contact with nasal and throat secretions of the infected individuals through droplet spread or direct contact. It is a highly contagious, and can be passed to others from one week before to one week after onset of rash. Incubation lasts 12 to 23 days, usually 14 days.



Clinical Features

Patients usually show symptoms of diffuse rash, fever, headache, malaise, lymph node enlargement, upper respiratory symptoms and conjunctivitis. The rash usually lasts about 3 days, but it may be absent in some patients. Arthralgia or arthritis is more common in adult women with rubella. Rubella can also cause anomalies in developing foetuses. Characterised by deafness, cataract, heart malformations, mental retardation, etc., congenital rubella syndrome may be diagnosed in infants born to women who got infected during the first 3 months of pregnancy.

Treatment

No specific treatment is now available. Drugs may be prescribed to reduce discomfort.

Prevention

Maintain Good Personal Hygiene

- Perform hand hygiene frequently
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper while sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash your hands thoroughly
- If you develop fever, rash or respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or school, avoid crowded places and seek medical attention promptly
- To prevent infection of non-immune individuals, stay home till 4 days from when the rash first appears if infected
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces with 1:99 diluted household bleach. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol
- Use absorbent disposable towels to remove obvious contaminants, such as respiratory secretions, then disinfect the surface and nearby areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach, leave for 15 to 30 minutes, rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol
- Maintain good indoor ventilation
- Children under one year of age, or non-immune pregnant women should not travel to areas with outbreaks or high incidences

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine

MMR vaccine is covered in the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme. Women who are at childbearing age and are not yet immunised should receive MMR before pregnancy for foetus protection. It takes about 2 weeks after vaccination for the immunity to develop. People of normal health can enjoy long term, even lifelong protection after vaccination. One dose of MMR vaccine is 93% effective, two doses 97%. Please consult your doctor about MMR vaccination if you are not sure about your immunisation status.

When to Receive Vaccination

All children should receive two doses of MMR, i.e. the first dose at one year of age and the second one at 18 months. MMR can be given together with other live vaccines or 4 weeks after receiving live vaccines.

Individuals with the Following Conditions Should Not Receive MMR Vaccine or Receive at a Later Time

- A history of serious allergic reaction to a previous MMR vaccination
- A known history of severe allergy to gelatin or certain antibiotics
- With cancer, on long term corticosteroids or immunodeficiency
- Pregnancy*
- On blood transfusion, other blood products or immunoglobulin within the past 11 months
- Has received other live vaccines in the past 4 weeks

*Women should avoid pregnancy for 3 months after vaccination by taking appropriate contraceptive measures.

Common Side Effects

- Soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site
- Fever
- Rash



Rare Side Effects

- Transient swelling of salivary glands
- Swelling of lymph glands (in the head or neck)
- Testicular infection
- Encephalitis
- Meningitis

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long does it take for immunity to develop after vaccination?

It takes about 14 days after the first dose of vaccination. The vaccine gives a 80 to 95% protection.

2. Can pregnant women receive MMR vaccine?

Pregnant women should NOT receive the MMR vaccine.

3. Can women planning for pregnancy receive MMR vaccine?

Women should not be pregnant for 3 months after vaccination.

4. How many doses of MMR vaccine are needed?

Adults should also receive two doses of MMR vaccine, and the second dose should be given 28 days after the first dose.

5. What are the common side effects of MMR vaccine?

There may be fever, and soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site.

6. Can individuals with food or drug allergy receive MMR vaccine?

Those who are allergic to proteins should NOT receive MMR vaccine, for the protein inside the vaccine may trigger allergic reactions.