



## MEASLES

### What is it?

- It is caused by the measles virus.

### Who catches it?

- Anyone can catch it but most common in 1-4 year olds who have not been immunized. It is very infectious. It will infect about 90% of people who come into contact with the virus
- Transmitted through direct contact and droplet infection.

### How serious is it?

- 9-11 days after becoming infected the first symptoms appear an increasing fever that comes and goes, runny nose, irritability, red eyes and a hacking cough.
- The rash starts from day 4 and the fever peaks at about 40.6C. Tiny white spots with a red base can be seen inside the mouth. The rash usually starts on the forehead and spreads downwards over the neck and body.
- The rash consists of flat red or brown blotches which flow into each other. It lasts 4-7 days.
- There can also be diarrhoea, vomiting and stomach pains.
- Complications are common but most are caused by secondary bacterial infections which can be treated with antibiotics.
- It can cause inflammation of the brain. This occurs 2-6 days after the rash appears. This complication occurs 1 in 1000 cases.
- A very rare complication is a slowly progressive brain infection that occurs years after the initial illness. It is very serious.
- It can cause miscarriage and premature labour.

### Can it be prevented?

- It can be prevented by a highly effective vaccine.

### When can the child return to school?

- **Measles is most infectious from 4 days before the rash appears until 4 days afterwards.**
- **It is recommended that the child does not return to school for at least 5 days after the appearance of the rash or as per doctor's instructions.**