Measles Transmission and Diagnosis

How does a person get measles? How do you treat it? Do you know the answer?
Measles, also known as rubeola, is an infectious viral disease that affects the a respiratory system and mostly occurs in winter and spring. The most common symptoms of measles include fever, runny nose, a hacking cough, conjunctivitis, and a spreading rash, some of which last about 2 weeks. In most cases, measles treatment simply involves treating the symptoms with paracetamol, regular rinsing of the mouth, and plenty of fluids to drink. Serious and rare complications can result from measles, such as hepatitis, pneumonia, and brain inflammation (encephalitis). Immediate medical treatment should be obtained if there is any sign of these developing. Measles symptoms and its complications are usually more severe in adults.

The measles virus resides in the mucus of the nose and throat of infected people. When they cough or sneeze, droplets spray into the air. These droplets remain contagious on infected surfaces for up to two hours.

Measles is a highly contagious disease, and about 90% of non-immunized persons will develop measles if they live in the same house as someone who has got the disease. The measles virus can be spread to other people from airborne droplets of fluid from the mouth or nose. People with measles are contagious from about 5 days after exposure to about 5 days after the rash appears.

Diagnosis of measles is based on the symptoms. Various laboratory tests may help with the diagnosis, but they are usually not necessary.

In some cases, if your doctor suspects that you or your child has measles, a virus culture or serologic blood test may be ordered. This blood test can detect measles antibodies, which indicate whether you have had an infection of the disease.

If you suspect that you or your child has measles, then contact your doctor as soon as possible in order to avoid the risk of developing complications or spreading the disease.