

# Measles is a serious disease

Measles is not a harmless childhood disease. It is a highly contagious viral disease that spreads easily among unvaccinated people. Symptoms usually appear 10 to 12 days after infection, initially resembling a cold, with a runny nose, cough and a slight fever. The eyes become red and sensitive to light. As the illness progresses, and usually on the third to seventh day, the temperature may reach 39–41 °C, and a red rash appears that lasts four to seven days.

Approximately 30 % of reported cases have one or more complications, especially among children under five years of age and adults over 20. Measles can be more severe in people with weakened immune systems.

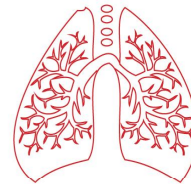
## Complications from measles infection



7 to 9 out of 100 children develop **ear infection**, which can result in hearing loss.



8 out of 100 patients report **diarrhoea**.



1 to 6 out of every 100 patients suffer from **pneumonia**. This is the most common cause of death from measles in young children.



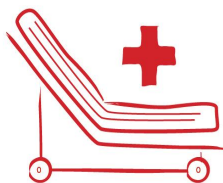
1 in every 1 000 patients develop acute encephalitis (**swelling of the brain**). This can lead to convulsions and leave a child deaf or with mental disability.



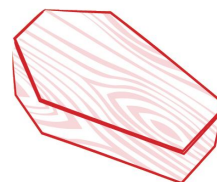
**Eye disorders**, such as destruction of the cornea (outer layer of eyeball) may lead to blindness. This condition affects, in particular, malnourished children and is linked to vitamin A deficiency.



A rare but **fatal brain complication** known as subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), can occur several years after measles.



1 out of 4 people who get measles will need **hospitalization**.



Up to 1 in 1 000 measles patients **die** as a result of the disease.

