

# Measles Outbreaks: How does this affect pregnant women?

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There have been over 22 states in the United States to report cases of the measles. Most of the cases reported are from unvaccinated individuals. According to the Department of Public Health, there have been 6 reported cases of measles in the state of Georgia as of April 25, 2019. Measles were thought to be eliminated in the U.S.A. in 2000 due to an effective vaccine program.

## **What are measles and the symptoms?**

Measles is an infectious viral disease. Symptoms start with fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat. Then a rash spreads over the body. Symptoms usually last 1 week. Children under 5 years old and adults over 20 years old can have complications from measles including, ear infection, diarrhea, pneumonia, encephalitis (brain swelling) and death.

## **What to do to prevent measles?**

Get vaccinated. Children get 2 MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines at 1 year of age and between 4-6 years old. Adults who have not received the vaccine should get the vaccine. Also, if you plan to become pregnant, ask your provider to check your titers to be sure your vaccine is up-to-date. Women should wait 4 weeks before getting pregnant after receiving the MMR vaccine.

Since MMR is a live vaccine, pregnant women are not able have the vaccine administered during pregnancy.



### **What to do if you think you have measles?**

It is recommended to avoid public places for 4 days from onset of symptoms or rash and notify your doctor. Call your doctor before visiting their clinic, so they may take precautions for other who may be susceptible to measles.

### **What to do if you are pregnant and think you have been exposed to measles?**

If you are pregnant and have been exposed to measles or think you have measles, notify your doctor immediately. Titers can be drawn to check immunity or serologic testing for measles IgG can be drawn. If your titers show non-immune or serologic testing is not available in a timely manner, ACOG recommends intravenous immunoglobulin (IGIV) treatment within 6 days of measles exposure.

### **What are complications that can occur during pregnancy by having measles?**

Measles infection in pregnant women is associated with severe adverse events including increased risk of hospitalization and pneumonia. Measles can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, low birth weight and increased risk of preterm delivery.

## References:

The American College of Obstetrician and Gynecologist (2019). Practice Advisor: Management of Pregnant and Reproductive Age Women during a Measles Outbreak. <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Practice-Advisories/Management-of-Pregnant-and-Reproductive-Age-Women-during-a-Measles-Outbreak>

Georgia Department of Public Health (2019). Three new measles cases in Georgia: Get Vaccinated. <https://dph.georgia.gov/three-new-measles-cases-georgia-get-vaccinated>

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