

Talking with unvaccinated clients

The MMR vaccine is the strongest protection against measles. However, some people don't get vaccinated. Here's what to tell them about:

Measles exposure

- Measles is very contagious. Unvaccinated people can catch the virus by sharing a room with an infected person — or by entering the room up to two hours after that person has left.
- Most unvaccinated people exposed to the virus will get measles. They can spread it to others for up to a week before they see a rash.
- Unvaccinated people who've been exposed should stay home for 21 days and avoid contact with others.
- Unvaccinated people should get the vaccine within 72 hours of exposure. This can protect them from getting sick or reduce their symptoms.

What to tell them about measles symptoms

- Measles symptoms don't show up all at the same time. They usually start a week or two after exposure.
- Clients with a high fever, cough and red eyes should stay home and watch for a rash, which usually shows up in a few days.
- If they see a rash, they should call a health care provider. The provider will help them make a plan to visit without spreading the virus.
- If the client has measles, their provider will help them manage the illness and prevent it from spreading. The client should stay home and apart from people.
- Most people recover from measles, but some have serious problems like ear infections, pneumonia or brain swelling.

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Preventing measles in our communities

A CHW guide for talking with clients

People in your community may have questions about measles and vaccination. Some might not know this illness is serious and spreading. Some might have concerns about the vaccine.

You can provide accurate, helpful information. This guide provides some example conversations to help guide you.

Remember to:

- Ask clients if they know about measles and the vaccine.
- Ask if you can share vaccine information before you do.
- Let them know everyone can help stop measles. That could mean getting vaccinated or staying home and seeking care if they're sick.
- Listen first and respond thoughtfully. Acknowledge clients' concerns. Avoid judgment.
- Avoid words that could make clients feel pressure, like "must" or "required."
- Ask them what questions they have.

Talking about measles with a client who:

Doesn't know much about measles or their vaccination history

CHW: Hello! How is your family?

Client: We're recovering from colds, but mostly healthy.

CHW: I'm glad your illness wasn't serious. Have you heard about the measles cases in Washington?

Client: A bit. Is that serious?

CHW: It can be if you're unvaccinated. May I ask if your family has been vaccinated?

Client: I don't know.

CHW: You can ask your clinic or pharmacy or sign up online to see your family's records. You'd go to myirmobile.com.

Client: I might check. But I'd rather not worry about it.

CHW: I understand. Measles is spreading now because vaccination rates are lower. Do you have questions about the vaccine?

Client: Not now. Maybe later.

CHW: Sounds good!

Has vaccine safety concerns

CHW: How are you feeling?

Client: Good! I've been going on walks.

CHW: I'm glad you're well! May I ask if your family is vaccinated for measles? It's been spreading.

Client: We are not. I heard vaccines can harm kids.

CHW: I understand. There is a lot of false information about vaccines. But the vaccine is safe and the strongest protection against measles. Some people have side effects for a day or two, but that's all.

Client: I don't want to get side effects.

CHW: That makes sense. But they are mild, especially compared to measles.

Client: I'll think about it.

CHW: If you'd like, I can tell you where the vaccine is available.

Lacks regular access to health care

CHW: How have you been?

Client: Busy at work!

CHW: I hope you're staying healthy. May I ask if you're vaccinated against measles? It's been spreading.

Client: I know. But I don't have insurance or a car.

CHW: I understand. Vaccination may be easier than you think. There are free vaccines for adults without insurance and for kids. Free rides to the clinic are available, too.

Client: It's still a hassle.

CHW: Getting vaccinated can be inconvenient. But getting measles disrupts life a lot. It lasts a week or longer. And people with measles should stay home and apart from other people.

Client: How would I get the vaccine?

CHW: I can tell you that!

More about measles: doh.wa.gov/measles

