

Information for parents and legal guardians

There is currently an **increase in cases of measles** in Austria, because children in Austria are receiving the **2 vaccines against measles too late and with too little consistency**: The vaccination coverage of children aged between 2 and 5 years old is only 92 percent, and approximately 10 percent of them are only vaccinated once instead of twice. In order to reach sufficient herd immunity, a vaccination coverage of 95 percent is required with two doses of a live vaccine against measles. As long as there are vaccination gaps within the population, which means that too few people are protected against measles, we must anticipate further cases of measles.

Measles is **highly contagious** and is transmitted via droplets (speaking, coughing, sneezing, etc.). It can affect unprotected infants, children, adolescents and adults. Sufficient protection exists after 2 vaccinations with a live vaccine documented in writing or if protective antibody levels are detected in the blood (titer determination).

Eight to ten days following the infection (21 days at most), measles causes general symptoms such as fever, runny nose, cough and conjunctivitis along with the typical measles rash: large red spots. People infected with measles remain highly contagious for four days before and four days after the rash has appeared. The **body's immune system is weakened** during and after a measles infection to such an extent that the risk of death by other diseases remains higher for many years! There is no treatment for the infection caused by the measles virus itself, it is only possible to alleviate the symptoms.

In 20 of 100 cases of measles, **complications such as bronchitis, otitis media and/or pneumonia** occur. 1-2 of 1,000 people infected with measles develop life-threatening **encephalitis**. In rare cases, brain decomposition can occur years later, which is always fatal. This late effect is called subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE). Children are particularly vulnerable to SSPE if they have fallen ill in the first year of their life or are infected during birth.

With a timely vaccination, you can protect yourself, your family and the people around you. We recommend **vaccinating children 9 months and older twice against measles, mumps and rubella at an interval of 4 weeks**. If you miss a vaccination, you can and should reschedule as soon as possible. The effective and well-tolerated vaccine is **available for free to everyone at public vaccination centres without any age restriction**.

Important

If your child is not sufficiently vaccinated against measles, he/she might be prohibited from visiting community institutions such as nurseries, schools, day care centres, etc.

for up to 21 days by health authorities if he/she has been in contact with a person infected with measles.

(see chapters 6 ff. of the Austrian Law on Epidemics)

Additional information:

- www.keinemasern.at
- Public information and vaccination centres of the Austrian federal states:
www.gesundheit.gv.at/service/beratungsstellen/impfen
- 2017 Austrian Vaccination Plan (Impfplan Österreich 2017): www.bmgf.gv.at/home/Impfplan