

LET'S TALK ABOUT

MEASLES

& HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

There is an alarming increase in the cases of measles across the world.

1 What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection, and can lead to severe complications and death. It is a vaccine-preventable disease that has previously been eliminated through effective vaccination in many countries, Alhamdulillah.

Measles can spread through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. It's important to diagnose measles early and prevent spread.



2 What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear 5-21 days after infection. Early signs include fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes. A red blotchy rash starts on the face and chest, and spreads to the rest of the body. Most people recover in 2-3 weeks, but severe cases may need hospital care.

2

3 What are the risks of infection?

Even for those who recover, there can be some lasting effects. Scientists have found that measles wipes out the body's memory of bacteria and viruses. This weakens your immune system, making you more likely to get sick from other diseases. This can last for years.

Measles can be deadly. In 2023 alone, an estimated 107,500 people globally died from measles – mostly unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children under 5 years old.



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4 Who is at risk or most vulnerable to measles?

Those most at risk of infection are individuals with no immunity. This includes:

- People who haven't received a measles vaccine, and
- Children with less than 2 doses of a measles vaccine.

Those most at risk of severe disease and/or hospitalization include:

- Young children (less than 5 years)
- Pregnant individuals
- People who have a weak or absent immune system (e.g., are undergoing cancer treatment or taking immune-suppressing medications).



5 How can we prevent measles?

The best way to prevent measles is with two (2) doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, which is safe, almost 100% effective, and works well. Side-effects are usually mild, and include a sore arm, low fever, or a rash.

Ensure you are vaccinated against measles, especially before travelling. Children should get the first dose at 12-15 months, and the second at 18 months or later. If travelling internationally or living in a high risk region, it is recommended to give the first vaccine dose as early as 6 months for early protection.

Not sure if you're up to date with your vaccines?

You can find out using this link: bit.ly/accessvxca



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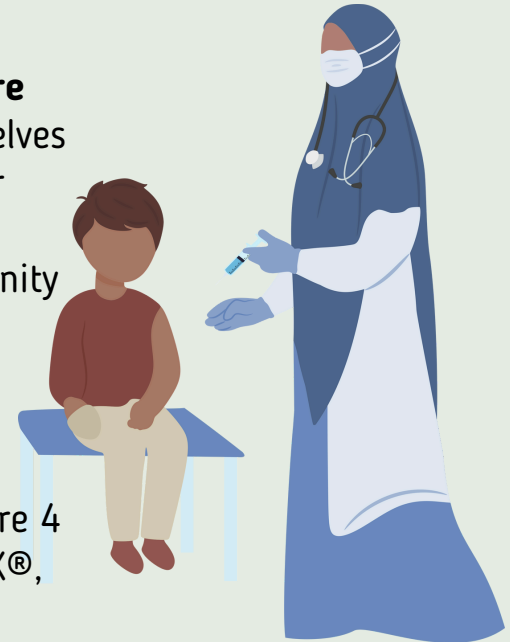
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6 Is the measles vaccine halal?

Vaccines are safe and effective, and halal options are available. Muslims are discouraged from putting themselves in danger: safe-guarding life includes taking care of your health and avoiding threats, such as disease. Getting vaccinated and protecting yourself and the wider community from disease is aligned with Islamic principles.

In Canada, the measles vaccine is only available in combination with the mumps and rubella vaccines, and sometimes, varicella (also known as chickenpox). There are 4 available measles vaccines (contain egg protein): PRIORIX®, M-M-R®II, PRIORIX-TETRA®, and Pro-Quad®.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The **Muslim Medical Association of Canada (MMAC)** and the **Canadian Council of Imams (CCI)** strongly recommend that all Canadian Muslims, including children, ensure they have received the measles vaccine unless medically contraindicated, as per the Canadian Immunization Guide.
- **PRIORIX®** and **PRIORIX-TETRA®** are the preferred vaccines, as they do not contain pig-derived gelatin. If these vaccines are not available or are not medically appropriate for you, you may take whichever vaccine is offered and deemed necessary by healthcare professionals (in line with [AMJA Fatwa #84728](#)).
- We encourage vaccine manufacturers, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, local public health units, pharmacies, and primary care providers to work collaboratively to increase the availability and promotion of vaccines free from porcine and other animal-derived ingredients. This will help enhance vaccine acceptance and uptake among Canada's diverse populations, including those with religious and ethical concerns.
- Speak to a trusted healthcare provider if you have an egg allergy, or any questions regarding the measles vaccine.

These recommendations are based on the current measles outbreak, the rise in cases in unvaccinated and undervaccinated individuals and communities, the significant effectiveness of the vaccine in eradicating measles, the significant short-term and long-term risks associated with measles, the decades of reassuring safety data of these vaccines, the protection from other diseases offered by combination vaccines, and ingredients of each available vaccine.