

# ***Measles***

Smallpox, the plague, and measles are all ancient diseases. Through the history of civilization each of these diseases has killed millions of people. Today we don't hear much about the plague or smallpox, but measles has maintained headliner status. In 2008, it is estimated that measles killed over a 150,000 people worldwide. We had been fortunate in the USA. The licensing of an effective vaccine in the 1960's, resulted in measles rates dropping to an all-time low in 2004. In that year, only 37 cases were reported in the US.

Now, ten years later, we are seeing an increase in the number of people infected with measles. The CDC reports that in the first 8 months of 2013 over a 150 cases were confirmed. Measles is a highly contagious viral infection that is spread through respiratory droplets. It presents as fever, cough, conjunctivitis (pink eye), sore throat, and a typical rash. It is most contagious just prior to developing severe symptoms and for 3-4 days after the appearance of the rash. Because it is a viral infection there is no available treatment for those who develop measles. Complication rates are highest in children under five years of age and include pneumonia, brain inflammation, seizures, and even death.

The best defense to measles is vaccination, although not 100%, immunization against measles is highly effective. Of those confirmed cases in 2013 only 3 occurred in fully immunized individuals. If you are not sure if you or your child has received the recommended two vaccines, please contact your physician.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/index.html>