

MEASLES

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“Measles is a highly contagious, airborne disease which spreads easily from one person to the next through coughs and sneezes, or direct contact with mouth or nasal secretions of infected people. Only humans are known to get measles. Most people do not get measles more than once. Measles is the most contagious transmissible virus known.

Prior to 1963: Seven to eight million children are thought to have died from measles each year before the vaccine was introduced. Pre-vaccine epidemic cycles occurred every 2-3 years. Lifelong immunity is provided by those surviving natural infection.

1963 Onward: The first vaccine invented and released in the U.S. helped bring a decline in measles throughout the world”.

MEASLES TIMELINE

In 1492: “Europeans first arrived in America and introduced diphtheria, influenza, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, small pox, tertian malaria, typhoid, typhus, and yellow fever, killing 50%-90% of the Native American population

In 1529: the Spanish introduced measles to Cuba, killing two out of every three Cuban natives.

In 1657: the earliest recorded measles epidemic breaks out in Colonial America.

In 1693: English colonial administrator, Edmund Andros, issued a proclamation for a “Day of Humiliation and Prayer” in hope of halting the measles epidemic.

1850-1859: Measles kills one-fifth of Hawaii’s population within a decade.

1916: A traveler from Denmark introduced the measles virus to Southern Greenland. Out of a population of 4,262, only five people were not infected. With efforts from Denmark to provide blood with antibodies, only 2% of the population died.

1954, 1963: Scientists isolated the measles virus (1954). Nine years later (1963), a vaccine was developed, introduced, and implemented.

1968: A new and stronger vaccine was developed.

1991: In Philadelphia, PA U.S.A., an outbreak of measles in Philadelphia was centered at a church that discouraged vaccination. Over 1,400 people were infected and nine children died.

2000: Measles declared eradicated in the world due to global vaccination.

2003-2015: No one in the United States died from measles.

2015: One woman died from measles in the U.S. Although previously vaccinated, she was taking an autoimmune medication that suppressed her immunity to measles.

2017-2019: As immunizations decreased from 2017 to 2019, deaths increased. A resurgence of measles occurred during 2019, as many parents would not have their children vaccinated.

MEASLES OVERVIEW

“Although a Persian doctor first described measles in the ninth century A.D., it wasn’t until the 1960s that measles affected approximately 3,000 people per million. It fell to 13 cases per million by the 1980s and about one case per million by the year 2,000. In 1980, 2.6 million people died of it and 545,000 in 1990. By 2014, global vaccination programs reduced the number of deaths from measles to 73,000. People suffering from malnutrition are more likely to succumb to death once infected. Most who die of measles are under five years old.

Measles were declared eradicated in 2000 due to global vaccination. However, there have been cases and outbreaks since that time because of the distrust of vaccinations and the parents who refuse to have their children vaccinated. The measles vaccine is effective in preventing the disease and is safe. Vaccination resulted in an 80% decrease in deaths between 2000 and 2017, with about 85% of children worldwide having received their first dose as of 2017.

Between 2003 and 2015, no one in the U.S. died from measles. One woman died in 2015, although previously vaccinated. She was taking an autoimmune medication that suppressed her immunity to measles. As immunizations decreased from 2017 to 2019, deaths increased. A resurgence of measles occurred during 2019, as many parents would not have their children vaccinated.

No specific treatment is available to those infected with measles. Drinking sweet and salty fluids, eating healthy foods, and medicating to control the fever may be effective. Antibiotics will heal infections and pneumonia if they occur. Vitamin A supplements are also recommended for children.”

REFERENCES

“Measles.” May 16, 2020, ***Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia***, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measles

“Timeline of Measles.” April 18, 2020, ***Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia***, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Measles