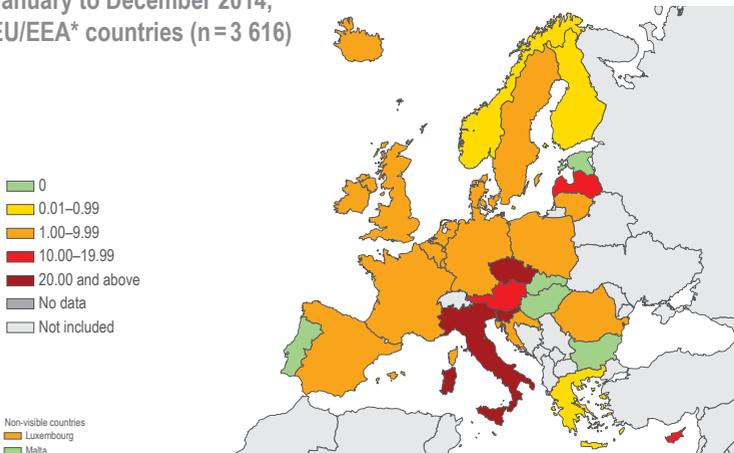


Measles is a serious disease – Vaccination is the only effective protection

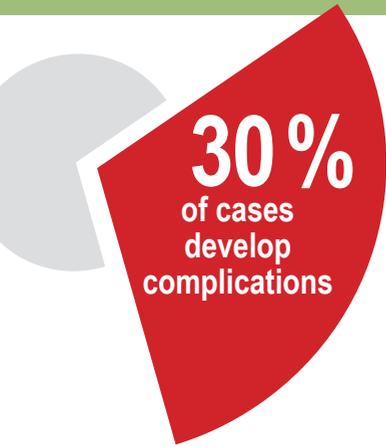
Measles outbreaks still occur in Europe

Measles has become rare in Europe compared to some other regions in the world, thanks to vaccination. Many people, including healthcare workers, may never have even seen a person with measles. This can give rise to a belief that the disease has been eliminated. But measles outbreaks continue to occur in many parts of Europe. An estimate of one out of four people with measles will need hospitalisation and every year several people die in Europe as a consequence of measles infection.

Measles notification rate (cases per million) by country,
January to December 2014,
EU/EEA* countries (n=3 616)



*EU/EEA: European Union/European Economic Area



Measles is highly infectious and can be severe

Complications range from ear infections, diarrhoea and dehydration, to pneumonia and can involve lifelong consequences such as blindness and brain damage from encephalitis. Most measles-related deaths are due to complications of measles.

Measles spreads easily

An unvaccinated person who is exposed to measles has a 90% probability of becoming sick. This is regardless of age and the 'strength' of her or his immune system. Vaccination is the only measure that prevents infection. There is no scientific evidence that natural remedies, diets or lifestyle changes reduce the risk of measles.



among those
not protected

probability
of contracting
measles if
not vaccinated

1 person
with measles can infect



an average of
12 to 18
unprotected people



A combination vaccine

protects against measles, mumps and rubella

The MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine is a combination vaccine that protects against the three diseases with only one shot. Some people fear that combination vaccines or giving several vaccines at the same time overloads a child's immune system or increases the risk of harmful side effects. But all combination vaccines have been thoroughly tested against giving the vaccines as separate shots, and there is convincing evidence that the combination vaccines do not significantly increase the risk or reduce the protection.



2 doses
of MMR vaccine are
recommended to
protect against measles



It is much safer to be vaccinated than to develop immunity by getting infected with measles. Measles vaccine protects without the risk of the severe illness, complications and death that comes with having the disease. There is no evidence that having natural disease is an advantage that justifies not getting vaccinated. National schedules differ but all countries recommend that the first dose is given during the second year of life (age 12 to 24 months).



Immunity through vaccination protects not only the immunised individual but also unvaccinated people in the community, such as infants that are too young to be vaccinated.

Immunity through the disease exposes other unvaccinated people to the risk of the disease before and during the time of infection, and comes with the risk of severe complications.

The MMR vaccine has an excellent safety record. Vaccinations, as every other pharmaceutical substance, entail a certain probability of side effects. Side effects, such as fever or local swelling at the site of injection, are usually mild, and more severe reactions are very rare.

Information resources on vaccines and immunisation

ECDC vaccination gateway

ecdc.europa.eu/en/eurovaccine

ECDC's interactive platform for vaccine schedules

vaccine-schedule.ecdc.europa.eu

ECDC factsheet for general public – Measles

ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/measles/Pages/factsheet-general-public.aspx

Reference

The content of this leaflet is based on the ECDC report: Measles and rubella elimination: Communicating the importance of vaccination. Stockholm: ECDC; 2014. Available at:

ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Measles-rubella-elimination-communicating-importance-vaccination.pdf



Measles vaccination protects you and your family. By vaccinating against measles you contribute to a healthy community.

