



## Measles Back in the News for Both Adults & Children *by Sara Barrett, FNP-C*

With the Arizona Department of Health Services confirming numerous cases of measles in the state, it's time to learn more to keep yourself and others safe.

In the decade before 1963 when a vaccine became available, nearly all children got measles by the time they were 15 years of age. It is estimated that 3 to 4 million people in the United States were infected each year. Also each year an estimated 400 to 500 people died, 48,000 were hospitalized, and 4,000 suffered encephalitis (swelling of the brain) from this virus.

One dose of measles vaccine is approximately 93% effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus and two doses are about 97% effective. People who received two doses of measles vaccine as children according to the U.S. vaccination schedule are considered protected for life and do not ever need a booster dose. Ask your healthcare provider should you have any question regarding your immunization.

The majority of people who got measles were unvaccinated. Measles is still common in many parts of the world including some countries in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. Travelers with measles continue to bring the disease into the U.S.

It can spread when it reaches a community in the U.S. where groups of people are unvaccinated.

### Diagnosis

Measles generally appear about seven to 14 days AFTER a person is infected. It typically begins with cough, runny nose, high fever and red/watery eyes. Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth; three to five days after, a rash breaks out -- usually beginning as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spreading downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet. Small raised bumps may also appear on top of the flat red spots. The spots may become joined together as they spread from the head to the rest of the body. When the rash

appears, a person's fever may spike to more than 104° Fahrenheit.

Common complications include ear infections and diarrhea. Ear infection from measles can lead to permanent hearing loss in one out of 10 children. Severe complications can include pneumonia and encephalitis (swelling of the brain) requiring hospitalization. Measles may cause pregnant woman to give birth prematurely, or have a low-birth-weight baby.

Measles is highly contagious and can spread through contact with infected mucus and saliva. The virus may survive for up to 2 hours on environmental surfaces.

Because it is a virus, there is no specific treatment for measles. If you think you may have acquired measles, call your health care provider IMMEDIATELY for instructions on what to do. Calling ahead will avoid exposing others. It is very important to stay home and away from others when infected.

## Second Neurologist Joins Practice!

Board certified neurologist **Thomas Habiger, MD**, has joined Thunderbird IM. A graduate of the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis School of Medicine where he completed his internship and residency, Dr. Habiger has served as the director of stroke, memory disorder and movement disorder programs and has cared for West Valley patients since 2008.

He believes that evaluating and treating conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease requires an understanding of the needs of the entire family rather than just the patient. Dr. Habiger is accepting new patients at both the Glendale Suite G-2 and the Indian School Road offices.

### LOCATIONS

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