

Preventing Measles Is Important

Most people today have never experienced caring for a child with measles. Measles is very contagious and very dangerous for babies and young children—28% must be hospitalized. Even two hours after an infected person leaves a room, you can catch measles just being in that room! Possible complications include pneumonia, lifelong brain damage, deafness and even death.

As a result, the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommend children receive all vaccines, including the Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) shot, according to the recommended schedule.

In spite of this recommendation, some parents are still choosing not to immunize their children for a variety of reasons. The main reason these parents cite is they heard there might be a link between the MMR shot and autism. However, any suggestion that autism is related to receiving the MMR vaccine has been soundly discredited by scientists in the United States and other countries.

When an unimmunized child contracts measles, they expose everyone around them to this dangerous disease. Because babies are not scheduled to be immunized until they are 12 months old, they are at great risk for being infected by someone with measles. If all people around babies are immunized, the babies are not likely to develop measles.

Anyone fearing the MMR or any other immunization should talk to their doctor to get the facts about safety. Making this type of decision without all the facts can be very dangerous, not only to their own children, but also to others who might come in contact with their children. Like many other diseases, a child can be very contagious before they show overt symptoms.

For further information: <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html> or feel free to contact the AgriLife Extension Office at 903-473-4580 or visit us at rains.agrilife.org. We are also on Facebook at [Facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences). Go and “Like” our page to keep up with the latest news, events, and programs offered by Family & Consumer Sciences in Rains County.