



Dr Wolfgang Muller (Consultant Paediatrician)

Parent Information Guide:

After Measles – What to Look Out For

Most children make a full recovery from measles, but it's important to know what to watch for after the illness.

Some problems can appear in the weeks, months, or even years after infection.

1. Short-term complications (days to weeks after recovery)

Even after the rash has gone, the immune system can stay weakened for several weeks.

Contact your GP if your child develops:

- Fever again after they seemed to be getting better
 - Cough, chest pain, or fast breathing (possible chest infection/pneumonia)
 - Ear pain or discharge from the ear (possible ear infection)
 - Diarrhoea and dehydration
 - Eye redness, swelling, or pus (possible eye infection)
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2. Medium-term effects (weeks to months)

- Some children may have a slow return to full energy.
 - Vitamin A levels can drop after measles, affecting vision and immunity (vitamin A is usually given during hospital treatment in some countries).
 - If your child's vision seems worse, or they have ongoing headaches or trouble concentrating, seek medical advice.
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3. Long-term and rare complication: SSPE

Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE) is a **very rare but fatal brain condition** caused by the measles virus remaining in the brain.

It develops **years** (average 7–10 years, but sometimes as early as 1 year) after the original measles infection.

The risk is higher if measles was caught under the age of 2 years, but it can occur at any age.

Vaccination with MMR prevents SSPE by preventing measles.

Early signs to watch for — even years later:

- Decline in school performance or learning
- Personality or behaviour changes
- Clumsiness or loss of coordination
- Seizures (fits)
- Gradual loss of vision
- Muscle stiffness or jerks

If any of these symptoms develop, seek urgent medical advice and tell the doctor your child had measles in the past.

Reducing the risks

- Make sure all other family members have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.
- Keep routine health checks and eye tests up to date.
- Watch for signs of infection in the weeks after measles.

When to get urgent help:

- Difficulty breathing, persistent vomiting, seizures, severe headache, sudden vision problems, or unusual behaviour at any time after measles.



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Remember:

Most children recover well from measles but knowing what to look for — both soon after illness and in the future — means problems can be picked up and treated as early as possible.

Enclosed is a link to further parent information:

Parent information on “My child is unwell – When should I see a doctor?”

<https://drwmuller.com/information-for-parents-carers/>

See: Emergencies: “When do I need to see a doctor urgently?”

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