Measles continues to be one of the principal causes of death in young children worldwide. Measles vaccines are effective and safe. Measles vaccines are available in monovalent preparations (vaccine targeting only one pathogen) or, more frequently, in combination with other vaccines, such as measles, rubella and mumps MMR vaccine (MMR).

Transmission

The virus is transmitted from person to person, through droplets from infected persons when speaking, coughing or breathing. Virus present in the air or on superﬁces remains active and contagious for 2 hours.

The data

Measles is a very contagious viral disease that affects mostly children and can cause severe health problems that can lead to death. Before mass vaccination began in 1980, measles killed 2.6 million people a year worldwide, 12,000 of them in the Americas.

Symptoms

Initial symptoms, which usually appear 10 to 14 days after infection, consist of high fever, malaise, cough, congestion, and conjunctivitis. Small white spots may appear on the inner cheek. Several days later, a rash appears, starting on the face and neck, and gradually spreading to the rest of the body.

Vaccines

Measles vaccines are effective and safe. Measles vaccines are available in monovalent preparations (vaccine targeting only one pathogen) or, more frequently, in combination with other vaccines, such as measles, rubella and mumps MMR vaccine (MMR).

Calendar

It is recommended that children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine:

- 12 months (1st dose)
- 18 months (2nd dose)

For more information, visit: www.paho.org/immunization

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