

Measles Infection

Prior to measles vaccine introduction, measles was once considered a routine, self-limiting viral childhood infection. Most children who developed measles recovered fully from the illness, with life-long immunity.¹ In 1955, there were 555,000 reported cases of measles and 345 associated deaths in a US population of 165 million people that year.^{2 3} An estimated three to five million Americans got measles every year, usually before age 15.^{4 5 6} In doing the math, it means that if 3.5 million Americans got measles in 1955 and 345 died, the measles death rate was about 1 in 10,000.

Complications can occur from measles; however, rates of complications have historically been very low:⁷

- 3 to 3.5 in 10,000 or 0.03-0.035% of measles cases cause seizures
- 1 in 20,000 or 0.005% of measles cases cause measles encephalitis
- 7 in 1,000 or 0.7% of measles cases are hospitalized
- 1 in 80,000 or 0.00125% of cases result in permanent disability from measles encephalitis
- 6 to 22 in 1,000,000 or 0.0006-0.0022% of cases result in subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE)

Measles infections were considered a normal part of childhood, so much so that television programs, such as the Brady Bunch and the Flintstones, made light of measles.⁸

Most cases of measles resolve without treatment and severe cases can be treated with medical interventions which include high doses of Vitamin A, Ribavirin (anti-viral medication), and measles immune-globulin.⁹

Research has found that getting natural measles may be protective against Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, asthma, hay fever and eczema. Measles infections are also associated with a decreased risk of death from cardiovascular disease.¹⁰

¹ Physicians for Informed Consent Measles – What Parents Need to Know Dec. 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/y2l3myck>)

² National Office of Vital Statistics. Reported Incidence of Notifiable Diseases the United States, 1959. *MMWR* Sept. 16, 1960; 8(53). (<https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/1302>)

³ U.S. Census Bureau. US Population by Year. (<https://tinyurl.com/y6zrx65n>)

⁴ Wood DL, Brunell PA. Measles control in the United States: problems of the past and challenges for the future. *Clin Microbiol Rev* 1995; 8(2): 260-267. (<https://tinyurl.com/y4mtle5m>)

⁵ Langmuir AD, Henderson DA et al. The Importance of Measles As a Health Problem. *Am J Pub Health Nations Health* 1962; 52(2). (<https://tinyurl.com/y59zl6su>)

⁶ Fiebelkorn AP, Redd SB et al. Measles in the United States during the Postelimination Era. *J Infect Dis* 2010; 202(1): 1520-1528. (<https://tinyurl.com/y58mtu9e>)

⁷ Physicians for Informed Consent Measles – What Parents Need to Know Dec. 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/y2l3myck>)

⁸ Rodgers A Measles: Exploring The Past Before The Marketing Of Vaccines *Collective Evolution* Mar. 7, 2015 (<https://tinyurl.com/y4oktnkt>)

⁹ Physicians for Informed Consent Measles – What Parents Need to Know Dec. 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/y2l3myck>)

¹⁰ Ibid