

Is It Influenza or Could It Be Measles?

Influenza and measles are viruses that both cause respiratory symptoms. The typical measles rash does not appear for 2-4 days, so during influenza season, symptoms of early measles can be confused with influenza.

Symptoms and History	Influenza	Measles
Recent international travel or contact with an international traveler	Rare	Frequent
Fever	High (102-104°F) lasting for 3-4 days	Begins low and gradually rises to high (103-105°F)
Red, Watery Eyes (Conjunctivitis)	Uncommon	Begins 2-4 days before rash starts
Runny Nose, Nasal Congestion	Common	Begins 2-4 days before rash starts
Severe Cough	Common	Begins 2-4 days before rash starts
Tiny, white spots inside the mouth (Koplik spots) accompanied by reddened buccal mucosa	Not present	Present along with fever and other symptoms before the rash begins
Red, Maculopapular Rash	Uncommon. If rash occurs, it does not have measles' typical head → foot progression	Appears 2-4 days after above symptoms. Starts first on the face and upper body
Generalized Aches and Pains	Rapid onset, often severe	Common
Fatigue, Malaise, Exhaustion	Rapid onset, often severe	Common
Pharyngitis	Common	Common
Vomiting or Diarrhea	Occasionally	Diarrhea can be a complication
Otitis media	Can be a complication	Can be a complication
Eyes sensitive to light	Not typical	Commonly accompanies conjunctivitis