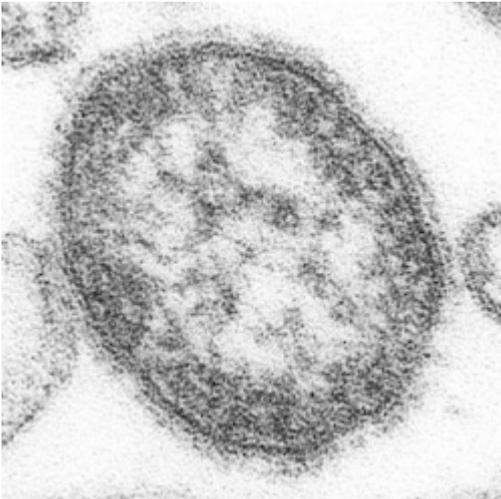


'Harmless' Measles Kills a Flight Attendant. Anti-Vaxxers Are to Blame



By Alex Berezow, PhD — August 13, 2019



Credit: Public Domain/Wikipedia [1]

How many times have we heard in recent years that measles is no big deal? That it's just a harmless childhood disease (nicknamed "Mickey Mouse measles" following the Disneyland outbreak)? That people who are vaccinated shouldn't be afraid of it?

Well, those typical anti-vaxxer arguments have been proven decisively wrong in the most tragic way possible: A 43-year-old woman who was a flight attendant for the Israeli airline El Al has [died after contracting measles](#) [2] and falling into a coma from encephalitis (brain swelling). She was vaccinated as a child, but as public health officials warn, vaccine protection can wear off over time.

The Tragic Truth About Measles

People in the developed world rarely die of measles. But that wasn't always the case. According to the [CDC](#) [3], before there was a vaccine against it, measles infected 3 to 4 million Americans each year, hospitalized 48,000, caused encephalitis in 1,000, and killed 400 to 500.

Thanks to vaccines and modern healthcare, these numbers are way down. But that still doesn't mean that measles is harmless. The [CDC](#) [4] further reports that approximately:

- 1 in 5 unvaccinated people who get measles are hospitalized
- 1 in 20 children with measles get pneumonia (which can be lethal)
- 1 in 1,000 children who get measles will develop encephalitis (which can cause deafness or intellectual disability)
- 1 to 3 in 1,000 children who get measles will die from respiratory or neurologic complications

There is also evidence that measles wreaks havoc on the immune system, partially "erasing" its memory of past infections. [Science News](#) [5] reported, "The resulting 'immune amnesia' leaves people vulnerable to other viruses and bacteria that cause pneumonia, ear infections and diarrhea."

The Way of a Fool Is Right in His Own Eyes

But scientific facts and pleas for personal responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us (the immunocompromised, children too young to be vaccinated, and the unknown among us whose vaccine has worn off) do not matter to the selfish fools who continue to reject vaccines. They have blood on their hands, they don't care, and society has not chosen to hold them accountable.

So expect this tragedy to repeat. Again and again and again.

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Links

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measles#/media/File:Measles_virus.JPG

[2] <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/13/health/israeli-flight-attendant-measles-death/index.html>

[3] <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/history.html>

[4] <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/symptoms/complications.html>

[5] <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/measles-immune-system-memory-infection>