



Measles supplementary immunization campaign in 7 townships of Yangon Region -- to prevent spread of measles

- ▶ duration from 17 to 28 February 2019
- ▶ target age: from 9 months up to 15 years of age
- ▶ townships: Hlaingtharyar, Insein, Mingaladon, Dagon East, Dagon Seikkan, Dagon South, Shwepyithar



Why measles matter?

Measles is a highly contagious, serious disease caused by a paramyxovirus. Symptoms of measles are:

- ✱ high fever
- ✱ cough, runny nose, red eyes
- ✱ rash of tiny, red spots covering the body
- ✱ diarrhoea
- ✱ ear infection.

Measles *can* lead to serious complications, including:

- ✱ blindness
- ✱ severe diarrhoea
- ✱ severe respiratory infections, pneumonia
- ✱ brain damage
- ✱ death.

Global measles outbreaks

Many countries around the world are facing measles outbreaks recently due to inadequate vaccination coverage.

This is why WHO is advising countries to attain universal coverage of measles vaccination -- **at least 95%**.

Globally, 230,000 measles cases were reported in 2018 -- compared to 154,000 in 2017.

Measles outbreaks in Myanmar¹

In 2017 and 2018, Myanmar reported 1,293 and 1,330 measles cases, respectively. About **75%** of these cases were under 15 years of age.

In 2019, currently, several townships in Yangon Region, and in other parts of Myanmar, observed measles cases -- this is why the health authorities, and partners, are implementing a supplementary immunization campaign.

When should my child receive measles-rubella vaccine?

- ✱ measles-rubella vaccine is given together -- at 9 months and 18 months of age.
- ✱ the national health authorities, and partners, are providing measles-rubella vaccine **free** of cost through immunization programmes.

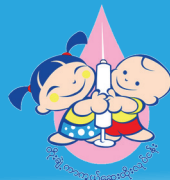


photo credit: Ministry of Health & Sports

Launching measles supplementary immunization,
Sunday 17 February 2019,
Hlaingtharyar township, Yangon Region.

Reference:

- 1 Central Epidemiology Unit, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Sports, as of 15 February 2019



Who is at risk of measles?

- unvaccinated young children are at highest risk of measles and its complications, including death.
- measles is highly infectious: 90% of close contacts are likely to contract the disease -- if unimmunized.

How can people get measles?

- measles is transmitted by droplets, through coughing and sneezing by an infected individual. It is also transmitted by direct contact with infected secretions of the nose or throat.
- an infected person can spread measles from 4 days *prior* to onset of the rash to 4 days *after* the rash erupts.

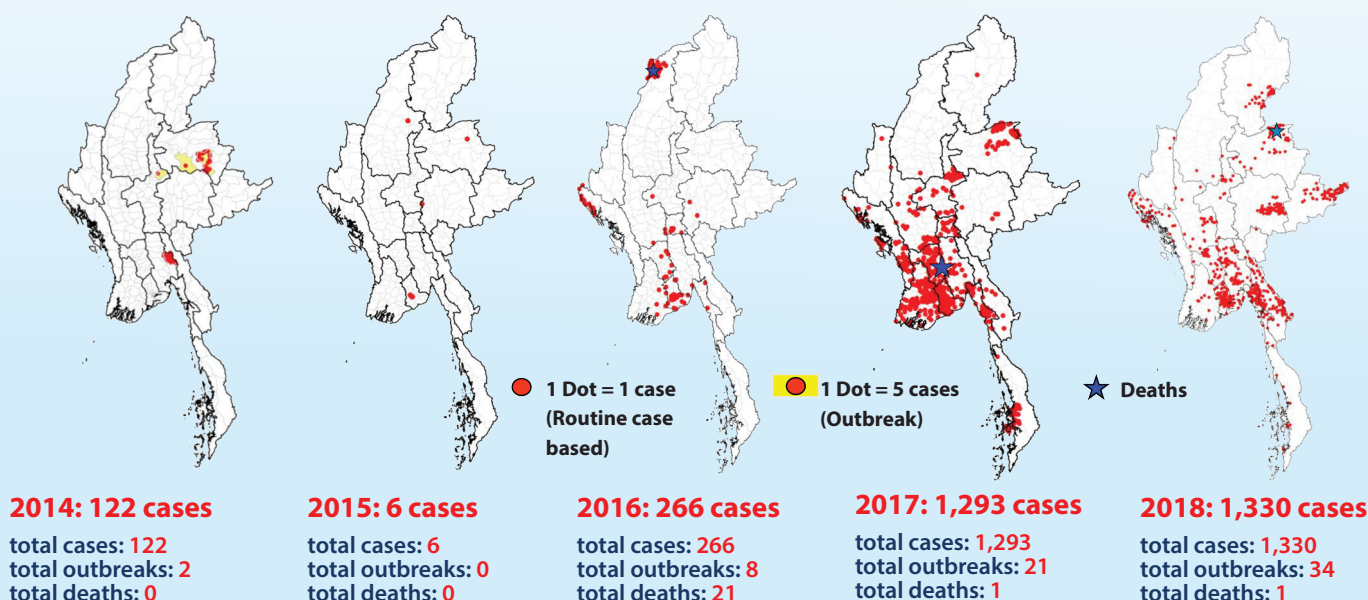
How to prevent measles?

- Vaccination is best way to prevent measles. Measles & Rubella vaccine is provided **free** by the national health authorities, and partners, in regular immunization programmes as well as in supplementary campaigns.
- Only symptomatic treatment is available for measles and rubella viruses, with plenty of fluids and rest advised. Timely vaccination is our best tool available to prevent infection.

Preventing measles: from supplementary campaign to universal immunization coverage

- the main purpose of supplementary measles immunization is to protect children and communities.
- the supplementary dose will boost immunity.
- a further purpose is interruption of transmission of measles itself -- possible by vaccinating all children. The better the coverage the greater the chance of interruption.
- measles elimination is one of the 8 flagship programmes of WHO South East Asia Region; target year for measles elimination is 2020.²
- even elimination of measles is possible -- if universal coverage of immunization is attained and sustained.

Measles cases in Myanmar, 2014-2018*



* Several years have passed since the last nationwide measles campaign in Myanmar. Therefore, it is important to note - as indicated by above reported cases - that the cumulative number of unimmunized children in Myanmar reached a level where the country will face measles outbreaks -- until a nationwide immunization campaign is implemented to reach the unimmunized children. The national health authorities, and partners, are already planning such a campaign -- likely to take place in October 2019.

Reference:

² <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/features/2014/rd-singh-vision/en/>