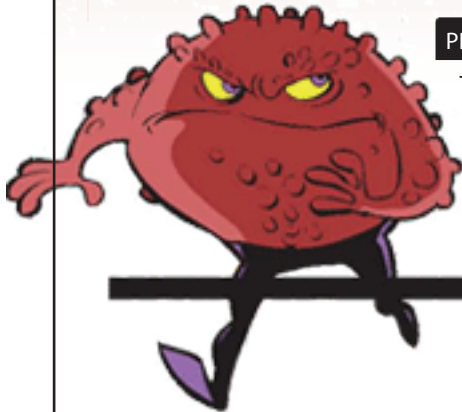


case file: krimson kreeps • real name: measles
known aliases: rubeola (pronounced ru-bee-oh-luh) • microbe type: virus



PROFILE

This operator begins inside of the body and works its way to the outside. The measles virus first grows unseen inside the throat and/or lungs. Then symptoms you can see start showing up—little red spots with gray tops inside the cheeks and throat, conjunctivitis (“pink eye”), and measles’ trademark skin rash that covers its victims from head to toe. On top of all that, measles infection slams people with a high fever (sometimes up to 105°!), cough, runny nose, and swollen glands.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Under measles’ attack, people feel very sick for about a week. Most people survive this assault. Even so, for every 1,000 kids in the U.S. who get measles, 1 to 2 die from it. Even if the body’s immune system defeats this invader, complications can sometimes set in like pneumonia or ear infections and in rare cases brain swelling can lead to seizures, hearing loss or mental retardation.

PREFERRED METHOD OF ATTACK

Measles is an “air and surface” attacker, spread mostly by coughs and sneezes. It’s a highly contagious and pretty tough enemy.

The proof? (1) Measles is so easy to catch that any person without vaccine protection is probably going to get measles at some point in life. (2) The virus is so tough that if an infected person sneezes measles virus out onto a surface (like a desk or door handle), it can live there for up to 2 hours, waiting to get onto the hands of the next person to touch that surface.

KNOWN WEAKNESSES

Measles vaccine can crush the ability of measles virus to infect people. We know this because the number of people who get measles in the U.S. has gone down by 99% since the vaccine first started being used in the 1960s. Everyone still needs to be vaccinated,

though, because measles is still busy infecting people in other parts of the world. It’s like measles is just waiting to hitch a ride when an infected person visits the U.S. or waiting for an unprotected person to drop into measles’ own town for a visit.

The most common measles vaccine is called “the MMR vaccine,” because it rolls three vaccines --for measles, mumps, and rubella --into one. This vaccine contains measles virus that is so weak and unable to grow that the body can easily fight it off. In fighting the weakling measles virus, your immune system learns how to beat this attacker and protect you against the real thing (called “wild measles virus”). After getting measles vaccine, 95% of people are protected. People need two doses of vaccine to be fully protected.

The vaccine is the best protection because there is no way to cure measles, only medicines to make a person feel better while their own immune system tackles the virus. However, measles only gets one chance at an unvaccinated person. Once someone has had measles, he or she is typically protected forever because the body has learned how to fight this attacker.

PREFERRED VICTIMS

Measles is such an active predator that it can infect pretty much anyone who is not protected by measles vaccine. It’s especially easy for people living close together (like college students in

dorms or passengers on cruise ships) and people working in health care (like nurses) to catch measles from the people around them. Measles may also infect people who travel to parts of the world where measles is more common.

PRECAUTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC

First line of defense: vaccines. Then, it’s just “back to basics.” Wash hands often with soap to get rid of any virus you may have touched. And, cover up coughs and sneezes to avoid passing germs of any kind to others.

AREA OF OPERATIONS

Measles strikes hardest in certain parts of the world. In developing countries—where fewer people are protected by vaccines, and many people lack food they need for good health—measles has been known to kill one out of every four people! During a U.S. outbreak between 1989 and 1991, more than 55,000 people were infected. Half of the people who got measles were kids under 5, and almost everyone who got measles hadn’t been vaccinated.

CRIMINAL RECORD

Measles’ criminal career in the U.S. was most successful early on, when no one was vaccinated. Back then, almost everybody got measles some time or another. And a lot more people died from it than do today. Throughout the world, measles remains a vicious predator. More than 10 million people worldwide are affected by measles each year.