

Measles

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Why in news?

After spending three years free from new cases of measles, Sri Lanka has been declared Measles free by the WHO.

What's the problem?

- Measles is a viral disease of contagion which is a major cause of death for young children worldwide despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.
- Measles is transmitted via droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of infected persons.
- Initial symptoms, which usually appear 10–12 days after infection, include high fever, a runny nose and tiny white spots on the inside of the mouth.
- Several days later, a rash develops, starting on the face and upper neck and gradually spreading downwards.
- Severe measles is more likely among poorly nourished young children, especially those with insufficient vitamin A or whose immune systems have been weakened by HIV/AIDS or other diseases.
- Blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhea and corresponding dehydration, and severe respiratory infections like pneumonia are all serious complications.
- In conjunction with mass immunization programs in normal low-coverage areas, compulsory infant measles vaccination is a vital public health policy for reducing worldwide measles mortality.