Measles Encyclopedia Article

Measles

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Measles Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Measles.....3

Measles

Measles is an infectious disease that is caused by a virus and primarily infects children. The symptoms of measles include high fever, headache, hacking cough, conjunctivitis and a rash which usually begins inside the mouth as white spots, (called Koplik's spots) and progresses to a red rash that spreads to face, neck, trunk and extremities. The incubation period varies but is usually 10-12 days until symptoms appear. Measles are sometimes called rubeola or the nine-day measles. Normally recovery is full. However, complications can arise if a secondary bacterial infection occurs, such as pneumonia or ear infection.

Measles was described as long ago as the ninth century when a Persian physician, Rhazes, first differentiated between measles and smallpox. He also made the observation that fever is a defense the body has against a disease, not a disease itself. His writings on the subject were translated into English and published in 1847.

The measles virus was first discovered in the 1930s; John F. Enders of Children's Hospital in Boston eventually isolated the measles virus in 1954 and began looking for an attenuated strain to be suitable for a live-virus vaccine. A successful immunization program for measles was begun soon after. Today measles is controlled in the United States with a vaccination that confers immunity against measles, mumps and rubella and is commonly called the MMR vaccine. Since a series of measles epidemics occurred in the teenage population, a second MMR shot is now required of many school-age children as it was found that only one vaccination appeared not to confer lifelong immunity.