



From the Doctor: Forgotten illness stirs on campus

Dear Dr. Copperman:

My friend has the ten-day measles. I think I had a vaccine shot in 1963. Can I still get it? If I can, should I get another shot?

Dear Scared:

Rubeola or "Hard" Measles is a very interesting although occasionally scary disease. It is caused by a virus which in the absence of immunity is very infectious. Prior to the development of the good measles vaccine in 1963, severe epidemics occurred every two to three years and virtually every child living in a relative urban environment developed the illness at some point.

The virus is transmitted by nasal and oral droplets. After being inhaled by a susceptible person, the virus enters the cells lining the air passages. Inside the cells it vigorously multiplies. Then about nine days later, there is a burst of activity as thousands of virus particles break out in the blood stream and spread to a multitude of organs.

The virus can be recovered from the blood, then from the eyes and tears, the lymph glands, even from the urine. About this time the person will develop fever, tearing and sensitivity to light, a non-productive cough and tiny white and red spots on the inside of the cheeks. Fever can be fairly high and the person generally feels pretty sick over the next five to six days.

About four to five days after the first symptoms begin the person will develop a rash over his face that quickly spreads over his neck, trunk and limbs. The infectious period lasts from four days before the rash to five days afterwards. After a person recovers, the immunity developed lasts for life.

Measles have several complications particularly with bacteria invading the ears and lungs. One very nasty complication is an inflammation of the brain and spinal cord that occurs four to five days after the rash appears. One out of every thousand people that get measles will develop this inflammation which is serious enough to cause death one out of 10 times.

Thus was measles as it used to be; the situation today after 14 years of vaccination is quite different. Most young children in this country today have been successfully vaccinated and the number of measles cases has fallen dramatically.

However, we are now beginning to see outbreaks of measles involving far fewer people, now primarily adolescents and young adults.

The reasons for this are two-fold. First, 20 per cent of children vaccinated when less than 12 months of age were protected from antibodies from their mother and did not develop immunity. They often are not exposed to measles when small because the epidemics have been controlled and they are thus susceptible to developing measles when older.

The second reason is that the vaccination techniques were not perfected until after 1967, and a proportion of people vaccinated between 1963 and 1967 also did not develop complete immunity.

The third reason is that not all children were vaccinated. In times past they would have surely gotten measles during the frequent epidemics. Now they can reach adulthood without contacting measles.

Because of this situation, in the

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Health Center sets hours for rubeola immunization

The Student Health Center will hold a vaccination clinic for persons who have never been immunized for rubeola (10-day measles), Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The clinic was planned by the health center, as a reported case of rubeola measles has been confirmed on campus, according to Ruth Atland, health center nurse. Atland added there are four other possible cases that have not yet been confirmed.

According to Atland, the campus clinic is directed toward the 17 to 30 age group because it is believed 95 per cent of the people over the age of 30 are probably immune to measles. Those persons who were immunized for measles between 1963 and 1967 should be reimmunized since that particular vaccine has been found to be inconsistently effective.

The health center stresses that fact that this is for Rubeola measles and not Rubella (German measles). The clinic also assures students that there is no epidemic. Atland says "it's just a

preventative thing."

Vaccinations will be given Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. and from 1 to 4 p.m. There will be an administrative fee of \$2 for each vaccine. Students will also be asked to sign a consent form.

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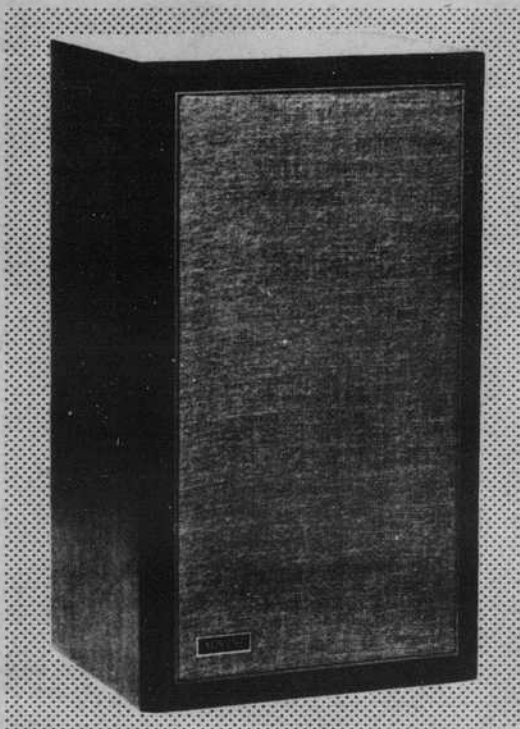
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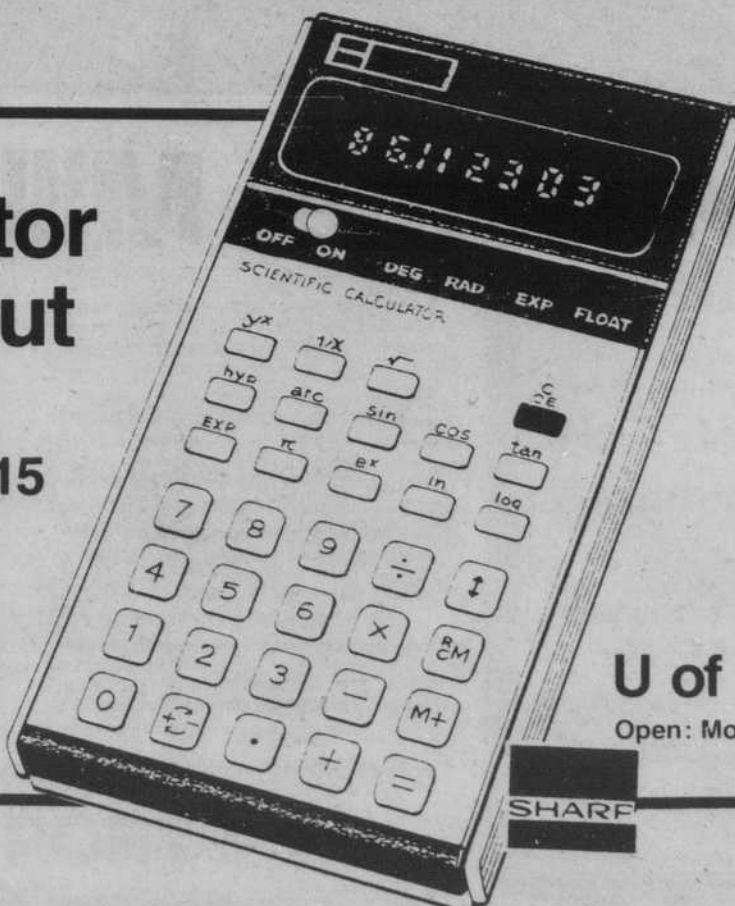
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