

January 25, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The current measles outbreak investigation in Clark County, Washington, raises questions about what parents should know in order to keep their children safe, and what their school will do if a case of measles is confirmed at their site.

Here are some important points to keep in mind:

- Measles is highly contagious. If a case is confirmed in a school or child care center, the health department will review all staff and student vaccination records to determine the risk of further spread.
- Keeping children in school/childcare is a priority, but measles is a serious disease. **If an unvaccinated person is exposed to measles, they will not be allowed to go to school or child care during the time period when they could become sick, usually for 21 days after exposure.** This may be extended if there are more measles cases.
- People excluded from school or childcare after a measles exposure are asked to stay home to avoid exposing others in the community.
- **Now is a great time for all families, teachers, and school administrators to review their vaccine records and get their vaccines up to date.**

See the reverse side for more information about measles and measles immunity.  
Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH  
Deputy Health Officer  
Multnomah County Health Department



## About measles:

- Measles is a contagious viral disease that can spread through the air when someone sick with measles coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread by direct contact with nose discharge and spit of someone sick with measles.
- The symptoms of measles start with a fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes followed by a red rash that usually begins on the head or face and spreads to the rest of the body.
- People are contagious with measles for four days before the rash appears and up to four days after the rash appears.
- After a susceptible person is exposed to measles, symptoms usually develop in 1 to 2 weeks but it can take up to 3 weeks.
- Complications of measles include ear infection, lung infection, and in rare cases inflammation of the brain.
  - About 1 in 1000 children die of measles.
- Anyone who is not immune to measles and believes they have measles symptoms should contact their health care provider or urgent care **by telephone before going in to the clinic** to make arrangements to avoid exposing others to the virus.
- People are considered immune to measles if any of the following are true:
  - You are a pre-school age child with one measles vaccine (MMR - measles mumps, rubella)
  - You are a school-age child (K-12) or adult who has had two measles vaccines (MMR - measles, mumps, rubella).
  - You were born before 1957.
  - You have had measles disease (diagnosed by a health care provider and confirmed with a lab test).
  - You have had a blood test that shows you are immune to measles.
- Anyone with questions about measles infection or the measles vaccine should call their primary care provider or their local county health department:
  - Multnomah County Public Health, 503-988-3406
  - Washington County Public Health, 503-846-3594
  - Clackamas County Public Health, 503-644-8411
- Up to date information on the investigation and public exposures can be found on the Clark County, Washington website. <https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/measles-investigation>