

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT MEASLES

A public service announcement from Pike County Health Department and the Department of Health & Senior Services.



From January 1 to April 26, 2019, 704 confirmed cases of measles have been reported in 22 states. This is the greatest number of cases reported in the U.S. since 1994 and since measles was declared eliminated in 2000. These cases occurred primarily among unvaccinated communities and are linked to travelers exposed to measles in countries with ongoing outbreaks, such as Israel, Ukraine, and the Philippines. Since January 1, 2019, one measles case has been reported in Missouri.

Measles is one of the most contagious of all infectious diseases; approximately 9 out of 10 susceptible persons with close contact to a measles patient will develop measles. The virus is transmitted by direct contact with infectious droplets or by airborne spread when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Measles virus can remain infectious in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. Patients are considered to be contagious from 4 days before until 4 days after the rash appears.

Measles starts with a fever that can get very high. Some of the other symptoms that may occur are:

- Cough, runny nose, and red eyes
- Rash of tiny, red spots that start at the head and spread to the rest of the body
- Diarrhea
- Ear infections

For some children, measles can lead to:

- Pneumonia
- Lifelong brain damage
- Deafness
- Death



Pike County Health Department
Home Health & Hospice

Persons who have been exposed to measles should contact their health care provider if they develop cold-like symptoms with a fever and/or rash consistent with measles. They should NOT go to any health care facility without calling first. The best way to stop the spread of measles is to be vaccinated. Two doses of MMR vaccine provides 97% protection against the disease. One dose provides 93% protection.

The current general recommendations for MMR vaccination in areas NOT affected by measles outbreaks are:

- Children should have their first dose of MMR between 12 and 15 months of age and their second dose between 4 and 6 years of age.
- Adults who do not have evidence of immunity (written documentation, laboratory evidence of immunity such as titers, laboratory confirmed measles infection, or birth after 1957) should receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine.
- Individuals who are considered high risk, such as healthcare workers and students attending colleges or vocational schools, should receive two doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.
- International travelers should receive the following MMR vaccinations:
 - > Infants 6-11 months of age should receive one dose of MMR vaccine.
 - > Children 12 months and older should receive two doses of MMR vaccine separated by 28 days.
 - > Adults with documentation of one dose of MMR vaccine should receive a second dose.
 - > Adults with no documentation should receive two doses of MMR vaccine separated by 28 days.

For more information call the Pike County Health Department at 573-324-2111 or visit our website for up to date public health alerts and advisories.