



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEY POINTS FOR MEDIA:

- At least four confirmed, linked cases of measles have been identified in Douglas County
- IDPH is working with area health departments and providers to offer immunizations, identify exposure locations, and provide guidance for exposed persons
- Immunization remains the best protection against measles; two doses of the MMR vaccine are 97% effective at preventing measles

Amid Measles Outbreak in Douglas County, IDPH Urges Illinoisans to Get Vaccinated

State, local health departments mobilize after at least four confirmed cases of measles identified in area residents

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is responding to an outbreak of measles in Douglas County, Illinois, involving at least four cases. An outbreak is defined as three or more cases that are connected by a common exposure source or epidemiological link.

IDPH is working with local health departments to identify residents who were exposed to patients during their infectious period and offer vaccination to those who are high-risk, as well as others in the community. Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) can be administered to unvaccinated persons six months and older who are exposed to measles, but they must receive the shot within 72 hours of first exposure. In addition, an injection known as immune globulin can be provided to high-risk individuals who cannot receive the measles vaccine or who missed the 72-hour window, including infants, pregnant persons, or people who are immunocompromised.

People who are non-immune (have no protection from measles) are encouraged to get vaccinated in consultation with a health care provider. It is important that all residents who are not immune (or protected from measles) get vaccinated at least two weeks before international travel or travel to areas with measles outbreaks.

“Illinois is fortunate to have high vaccination rates overall that protect most Illinois residents from measles,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “However, there are still areas across the state with lower vaccination rates where people are at high risk. With almost 3,000 cases in the US so far this year, IDPH has been preparing and works closely with local public health and health care partners on strategies to reduce spread and minimize outbreaks. IDPH continues to urge clinicians to be attentive to pre-travel vaccination needs and consider a measles diagnosis in patients with consistent symptoms and alert their local health department immediately if they suspect a case.”

“The key to preventing measles is the highly effective measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two doses of measles vaccine are 97% effective in preventing measles,” said Dr. Vohra. “I recommend that our Illinois residents make sure that they and their family members are up to date on the MMR vaccine and all other age-appropriate immunizations.”

Measles is a highly contagious disease, which is caused by a virus. It can easily be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through direct contact with nose or throat secretions from an infected individual.

Measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, but unfortunately it has seen a resurgence in recent years as national immunization rates have dropped. The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is administered in two doses. The first is usually given around one year of age and the second between four and six years of age, usually before the child starts school, but can be given as soon as 28 days after the first dose. A single dose is 93% effective in preventing measles, while the two-dose regimen is 97% effective.

You can learn more about measles and how to prevent it at [Measles](#) on the IDPH website. There you can also find other resources, including IDPH’s [School Vaccination Coverage Dashboard and Measles Outbreak Simulator Dashboard](#)

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