



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEY POINTS FOR MEDIA:

- IDPH reminds Illinois residents to check their measles vaccination status and get vaccinated if needed.
- There have been 23 confirmed Measles cases across Illinois in 2026; however, the risk to Illinoisans remains very low.
- Residents should contact their health care provider immediately if they are exposed to Measles.

IDPH Urges Illinoisans to Get Vaccinated Against Measles as Cases Rise

CHICAGO – As measles cases across the country increase, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reminding residents to protect themselves by confirming they are vaccinated against the disease. While the risk for getting measles remains very low for residents, vaccination is the most effective step people can take to protect themselves and their loved ones.

In 2026 to date, there have been 23 confirmed measles cases in Illinois mainly driven by an outbreak in Douglas and Moultrie Counties (16 cases). The outbreak, defined as three or more cases that are connected by a common source, is among unvaccinated people or people with an unknown vaccination history. The impacted local health departments have made considerable efforts towards mitigating the outbreak through intensified vaccination campaigns and community outreach. Additional recent cases not related to outbreaks have been identified in Kane and Madison counties. IDPH maintains a list of potential exposure areas, which can be found [here](#).

“The key to preventing measles is the highly effective measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, two doses of which are 97% effective in preventing measles. While Illinois is fortunate to have high vaccination rates overall, there are still areas across the state with lower vaccination rates where people are at high risk,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “IDPH continues to work closely with local health departments to offer vaccination opportunities and develop strategies to minimize spread. To keep yourself and your loved ones safe, confirm you are up to date on the MMR vaccine and all other age-appropriate immunizations.”

Measles is a highly contagious disease that 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. Although measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, it has experienced a resurgence in recent years due to a drop in national immunization rates.

To increase vaccination rates among Illinois residents living in or near a county experiencing an outbreak, IDPH and local health departments have:

- Facilitated the administration of over 200 MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccines since the beginning of the outbreak in August by supporting local events including:
 - Moultrie Local Health Department’s weekly in-office vaccine events as well as expanded walk-in vaccination availability.

- Coles Local Health Department's walk-in vaccination availability.
- Douglas Local Health Department's weekly community vaccine events and daily walk-in availability.
- IDPH has offered grants to local health departments experiencing increased measles cases to support vaccination efforts.
- IDPH has also held weekly calls with affected local health departments to expand on-the-ground vaccination efforts and coordinate response activities.

Treatment and Prevention

- The best way to protect yourself and others is to receive the highly effective measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, 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 a 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.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which can be administered to unvaccinated persons six months and older who are exposed to measles, can prevent disease or lessen its severity if administered quickly; unvaccinated exposed people should call their clinicians or local health departments immediately if they think they might be eligible for PEP.
- IDPH lists an exposure location [on its website](#) in situations where all exposed persons cannot be directly identified. Recent potential exposure locations include Chicago's Union Station, Salt + Smoke restaurant in Edwardsville, and more.
- Additional prevention information can be found on IDPH's [Measles](#) webpage.
- IDPH's online data resources include: the [School Vaccination Coverage Dashboard](#) and the [Measles Outbreak Simulator Dashboard](#).

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