

May 4, 2018

## **Measles Investigation FAQs**

Health officials in Kansas were first notified of a case of measles in a Johnson County, Kan. child care facility on March 8, 2018 after an infant who was too young to be vaccinated was infected with measles while traveling internationally. Since then, the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have identified 22 cases of measles in northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri that are epidemiologically linked. Health officials continue to investigate this outbreak and are working to identify contacts. Age, gender and vaccine status of the identified cases will not be made public in order to protect patient confidentiality. This is an ongoing investigation and updated information will be provided as it becomes available.

### **Who is at risk?**

You are at extremely low risk for contracting measles if you were not at any of these locations; you have been vaccinated for measles; or you have had the measles. However, **those who are unvaccinated or infants under the age of 1 who are too young to be vaccinated are at risk for contracting measles** if they visited one or more of these locations on the dates and times listed on these websites:

[Measles Exposure Sites in Kansas](#)

[Measles Exposure Sites in Missouri](#)

### **How is measles spread?**

Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is so contagious that if one person has it, 9 out of 10 people around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected. Measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected. An infected person can spread measles to others even before knowing he/she has the disease—from four days before developing the measles rash through four days afterward.

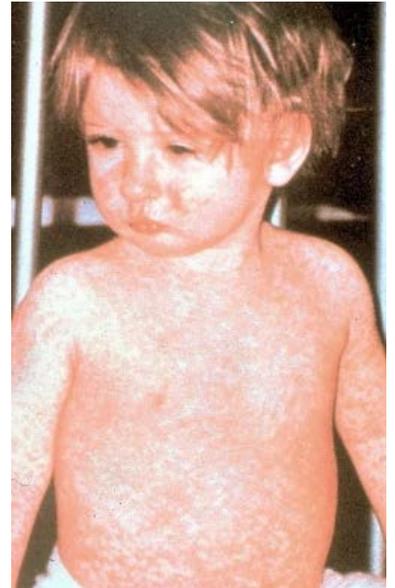
Although no vaccine is 100% effective, it is highly unlikely that a vaccinated person will become infected and spread measles to others.

## What are the signs and symptoms of measles?



Symptoms of measles generally appear about 7 to 14 days after a person is infected. Measles typically begins with a mild to moderate fever accompanied by cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. Two to three days later, Koplik's spots (tiny red spots with bluish-white centers inside mouth on the lining of the cheek), which are a characteristic sign of measles, may appear. At this time the fever spikes, often as high as 104-105°F.

At the same time, a red blotchy rash appears, usually appearing first on the face - along the hairline and behind the ears. This slightly itchy rash rapidly spreads downward to the chest and back and, finally, to the thighs and feet. In approximately one week, the rash fades in the same sequence that it appeared.



## What if I have measles symptoms?

If you are experiencing measles symptoms, stay at home and call your healthcare provider. It is important to notify them BEFORE you go to their office that you suspect measles so appropriate measures can be taken to protect other patients and medical staff.

Once you're at the office, your healthcare provider will do an exam and ask about your exposure history before any testing is done. If you need to be tested, your healthcare provider will likely swab the inside of your nose and may take a blood sample.

Depending on your vaccine status and when you were exposed, your healthcare provider may offer you a measles vaccine which may provide some protection. If you are not able to get the vaccine or you refuse it, you will need to stay home from work, school or child care for 21 days, per the Kansas Administrative Regulation 28-1-6, to prevent the spread of the illness.

## Prevention of measles – Get vaccinated

Immunization is the best way to protect yourself and your child from getting measles. The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment recommends the following:

- Children or adults born after 1957 have two doses of a measles-containing vaccine (the MMR). The first dose of the MMR vaccine is usually given to children at age 12-15 months; the second dose at age 4-6 years or at least 28 days after the first dose.
- Individuals who work in a healthcare setting or medical facility, have two doses of a measles-containing vaccine (typically the MMR) regardless of birth year.

Since measles is still common in many countries, unvaccinated travelers can bring measles to the U.S. and it can spread. Before any international travel:

- Infants 6 months through 11 months of age should have 1 dose of MMR vaccine. If they receive 1 dose of MMR before their first birthday, they should get 2 more doses of the vaccine (one at 12 through 15 months of age and another dose at least 28 days later).
- Children 12 months of age or older should have 2 doses separated by at least 28 days.
- Adolescents and adults who do not have evidence of immunity should get 2 doses separated by at least 28 days.

We offer immunizations on a walk-in basis at our clinics in Olathe (11875 S. Sunset Drive) and Mission (6000 Lamar Ave.).

### **If my child has only received one MMR vaccine, are they at risk?**

The MMR vaccine is very effective in preventing measles. One dose of measles vaccine is about 93% effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus. Two doses are about 97% effective. However, if your child is experiencing measles symptoms, keep them at home and contact your healthcare provider.

Currently, there is no recommendation by the CDC to get the second dose of MMR earlier than recommended – age 4. Parents should discuss any changes to their child’s vaccine schedule with their healthcare provider.

### **I don’t know if I am immune to measles, do I need to be vaccinated?**

If you’re unsure whether you’re immune to measles, you should first try to find [your vaccination records](#) or documentation of measles immunity. If you do not have written documentation of measles immunity, you should get vaccinated with measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Another option is to have a doctor test your blood to determine whether you’re immune. But this option is likely to cost more and will take two doctor’s visits. There is no harm in getting another dose of MMR vaccine if you may already be immune to measles (or mumps or rubella).

### **Do I ever need a measles vaccine booster?**

No. CDC considers people who received two doses of measles vaccine as children according to the U.S. vaccination schedule protected for life, and they do not ever need a booster dose.

Adults need at least one dose of measles vaccine, unless they have evidence of immunity. Adults who are going to be in a setting that poses a high risk for measles transmission should make sure they have had two doses separated by at least 28 days. These adults include students at post-high school education institutions, healthcare personnel, and international travelers.

If you're not sure whether you were vaccinated, talk with your doctor. More information about [who needs measles vaccine](#).

### Reporting a case of measles

Any healthcare provider who suspects a patient may have measles should **isolate the patient using airborne precautions and report the disease immediately** (within 4 hours) to JCDHE at **913-826-1303** (during regular business hours) or the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at **877-427-7317** (after business hours and weekends) PRIOR to testing.

### Where can I find more information about measles?

Visit the CDC's website for more information about measles and how to prevent the disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>



11875 S. Sunset Drive, Suite 300, Olathe, KS 66061  
6000 Lamar Ave., Suite 140, Mission, KS 66202  
913-826-1200 • [www.jocogov.org/jcdhe](http://www.jocogov.org/jcdhe)  
Disease Reporting: 913-826-1303; Fax: 913-826-1300

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