

SITUATION

The United States is experiencing a significant measles outbreak, with confirmed case counts from the CDC already more than double the 2024 total. The outbreak has led to both hospitalizations and multiple deaths, with the current hospitalization rate at 12%. For current case counts, visit the [CDC Measles Cases and Outbreaks website](#).

On April 18, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services [announced](#) a case of measles in a child in Taney County related to international travel.

BACKGROUND

The resurgence of measles is largely attributed to declining vaccination rates, which have fallen below the 95% threshold necessary for herd immunity. The Missouri kindergartener measles vaccination rate was 90.14% at the start of the 2024-2025 school year (compared to 94.6% in 2019). Measles vaccination rates by county are available from the [DHSS](#). The CDC reports that 97% of national cases involve individuals who are either unvaccinated or have an unknown vaccination status. Globally, measles remains a pressing concern. In 2023, an estimated 10.3 million people were infected, with outbreaks occurring in every region of the world. The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is highly effective, with two doses providing approximately 97% protection against measles.

MHA is prepared to work proactively with member organizations to develop strategies that will prevent risk to patients and staff. Should you have additional information to share or have questions, please contact Keri Barclay, Manager of Clinical Preparedness, at kbarclay@mhanet.com.

ASSESSMENT

Incubation Period

The incubation period is typically 11 to 12 days from exposure to the measles virus until the first symptoms appear. A rash follows the initial symptoms two to four days later and usually lasts five to six days. Measles is infectious four days before and four days after the rash onset.

Signs and Symptoms

Measles symptoms may appear seven to 14 days after contact with the virus. Measles typically begins with these symptoms.

- High fever (may spike to more than 104 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Cough
- Runny nose (coryza)
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)

Three to five days after symptoms begin — measles rash:

The rash usually begins as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline. The rash then spreads downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet.

- Small, raised bumps also may appear on top of the flat red spots.
- The spots may become joined together as they spread from the head to the rest of the body.
- When the rash appears, a person's fever may spike to more than 104 F.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review your facility's infectious disease plan and airborne isolation precautions.
- Review and implement "Identify – Isolate – Inform" practices.
- Consider encouraging providers to share vaccination recommendations with patients and ensure staff know what measles symptoms look like, as many may be unfamiliar.

Identify

- As part of triage or initial screening, ask patients with signs and symptoms of measles, including a rash, about a possible measles exposure.
- Patients who are symptomatic or ill and had a recent measles exposure should be directed to an isolation room.

Isolate

- Patients should be placed in an airborne isolation room, if available, and [appropriate PPE](#) should be worn during the evaluation process.

Inform

- Measles (rubeola) is [required](#) to be reported within one (1) day to the local health authority or DHSS Emergency Resources Center at 573-751-5152 or 800-392-0272. Cases are required to be reported upon suspicion and should not be delayed until laboratory confirmation in accordance with 19 CSR 20-20.020.
- Conduct contact tracing in your facility for individuals who may have been exposed.

RESOURCES**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- [Measles Cases and Outbreaks](#)
- [Measles Landing Page](#)
- [Clinical Overview of Measles](#)
- Manual for the Surveillance of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases — [Chapter 7: Measles](#)
- CDC Health Alert: [Expanding Measles Outbreak in the United States and Guidance for the Upcoming Travel Season](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Measles in Healthcare Settings](#)
- CDC Clinical Overview of Measles: [Diagnosis, Laboratory Testing and Outbreak Response Training](#)

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

- [Communicable Disease Investigation Reference Manual](#)
- [Vaccination Rates by County](#)
- DHSS Communicable Diseases: [Measles](#)
- [Missouri State Public Health Laboratory - Measles](#)

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)

- [Measles Playbook](#)