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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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Measles outbreak identified in Washtenaw County

Public health officials urge families to ensure they are up to date on all vaccines, including MMR, particularly if traveling over spring break

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Washtenaw County Health Department have confirmed a measles outbreak; defined as three or more related cases of measles. Three linked cases have been reported since March 12, all in Washtenaw County.

At this time, there are no new public exposure sites to report in Michigan. As previously noted by Washtenaw County Health Department, the initial Michigan measles case was associated with travel to Florida. The additional cases linked to this outbreak demonstrate how quickly measles can spread among individuals who are not immune to the virus.

Public health officials are urging families to ensure they are up to date on all vaccines, particularly if traveling, as more than 1,350 cases of measles have been recorded across 31 states during the first three months of 2026.

“Measles cases are spreading like wildfire this year, and with families traveling over spring break the risk of exposure increases,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. “In this case, what happens on spring break does not stay on spring break. Measles is incredibly transmissible and can easily travel home with us, infecting others in our schools and communities. The MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine remains our best defense, and two doses of MMR offer 97% protection against measles. We urge all Michigan residents to check their vaccination records to ensure they are up to date with the MMR vaccine.”

Vaccine uptake in Michigan has continued to drop over the past year, leaving more children and young adults vulnerable to this virus, which can cause hospitalization, brain swelling, pneumonia and even death.

“Our team is working very hard to contain this outbreak as much as possible,” said Dr. Juan Luis Marquez, Washtenaw County Health Department medical director. “It saves valuable time and resources when people are fully protected through vaccination and allows us to focus where people may be vulnerable because they’re too young for vaccination, immunocompromised or pregnant.”

Measles is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable disease that spreads through direct person-to-person contact and through the air. Anyone who is not immune to measles is at risk. Measles symptoms usually appear seven to 14 days after contact with the virus but can take up to 21 days. Measles can be spread by an infected individual before they show symptoms.

Common symptoms include:

- High fever (may spike to over 104°F).
- Cough.
- Runny nose.
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis).
- Tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums and roof of the mouth (Koplik Spots).
- A rash that starts as flat red spots on the face at the hairline, then spreads to the trunk, arms and legs three to five days after symptoms begin. Small, raised bumps may also appear on top of the flat red spots.

Individuals who think they may have been exposed, or who develop symptoms, **are urged to call their health care provider before seeking testing or treatment** so steps can be taken to prevent exposure to other individuals.

Vaccines are available at doctor's offices, most pharmacies and local health departments. Children eligible for the Vaccines for Children program can receive no-cost vaccination at a provider enrolled in that program.

It is possible that individuals vaccinated prior to 1968 received a less-effective version of the vaccine. Individuals vaccinated before 1989 may have only received one dose of the MMR vaccine and may be eligible for a second dose. If you fall into either of these categories, or if you are unsure whether you have ever received the MMR vaccine, contact your health care provider or local pharmacy to see if you are eligible for a dose of the vaccine.

For more information on measles in Michigan, visit [Michigan.gov/Measles](https://www.michigan.gov/Measles).

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