



For Immediate Release

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Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Case of measles confirmed in traveler to Missouri

Case is visitor to Missouri associated with international travel, likely with limited public exposure

JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is announcing a confirmed case of measles in a visitor of Taney County associated with recent international travel. The case is in a child whose vaccination status has not yet been verified. There is no indication of widespread exposure as this person was diagnosed soon after arrival to Taney County. Exposure is believed to be limited, and known contacts have been identified and contacted. DHSS is supporting the Taney County Health Department in the disease investigation and advising individuals with possible exposure. This is the first confirmed measles case detected in Missouri this year.

[Measles](#) is a highly contagious viral illness that typically begins with fever, cough, runny nose and red and watery eyes. Symptoms appear 7-14 days after contact with the virus. Tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth 2-3 days after symptoms begin. Measles rash appears 3 to 5 days after the first symptoms. It usually begins as [flat red spots](#) that appear on the face at the hairline. They then spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet. Measles can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and death. Measles can be transmitted by direct contact with infectious droplets or by airborne spread when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. The virus can remain infectious in the air and on surfaces for up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves an area. People who are infected will begin to have symptoms on average 1-2 weeks after being exposed to a person with measles.

People who think they have measles or may have been exposed to measles should isolate themselves and call their health care provider before arriving to be tested. It is important to let the provider know that the patient may have measles and to get instructions on how to come to the office for diagnosis without exposing other people to the virus.

The best way to prevent getting sick is to be immunized with two doses of a measles-containing vaccine, which is primarily administered as the combination measles-mumps-rubella or MMR vaccine. Two doses of the MMR vaccine prevent more than 97 percent of measles infections. A small number of vaccinated people can occasionally develop measles. In these cases, the symptoms are generally milder, and they are less likely to have severe disease symptoms and spread the virus to other people. DHSS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend children receive one dose of MMR at 12 to 15 months of age and another at 4 to 6 years. Unvaccinated adults can also receive “catch-up” MMR vaccination. Children too young to be vaccinated are more likely to have severe complications if they get infected with the measles virus. However, each MMR dose lowers the risk of infection and the severity of illness if infected.

“For those unvaccinated or those unsure of their vaccination status, now is the time to review records and get caught up if needed,” said Dr. George Turabelidze, state epidemiologist with DHSS.

Health care providers can find recommendations for infection control and diagnostic testing in the [health alert issued on March 7](#). Providers should report any suspected cases to their local health department immediately, preferably while the patient is still with the provider.

More information about measles and county-level MMR vaccination rates can be found at [Health.Mo.Gov/Measles](https://health.mo.gov/measles).

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The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) promotes health and safety in Missouri through prevention, collaboration, education, innovation and response. The vision of DHSS is the optimal health and safety for all Missourians, in all communities, for life. Learn more at health.mo.gov.