

IMPORTANT UPDATES ABOUT MEASLES



As of March 20, 2025

- Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus.
- Measles spread easily when someone with measles breathes, coughs, or sneezes. It can also spread if people touch surfaces or items with the virus on them.
- Measles can cause severe disease and death.
- Measles stopped spreading in the United States in 2000 because the vaccine is very effective. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people couldn't get vaccinated, which led to more measles cases around the world. To continue to keep measles away, at least 95% of people need to be vaccinated.
- **Right now, there is a measles outbreak in Texas and New Mexico. As of March 13, 2025, 301 people have been affected. 50 people have gone to the hospital, and at least one school-aged child who was not vaccinated has died.**

Who can get measles?

- Anyone, but it is most common in children and people who are unvaccinated.

How do I know if I or my child might have measles?

- Measles infection can occur 10-14 days after direct or indirect contact with another person with measles.
- The first symptoms of measles are usually a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes. Later, people may get white spots in their mouth and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the body.
- At least 1 in 5 unvaccinated people who get measles will become very ill and need to go to the hospital.
- Serious effects of measles include dehydration, blindness, brain damage, and pneumonia.
- Measles during pregnancy can be dangerous for the pregnant person and their baby.
- **If you think a family member might have measles please call your healthcare provider right away.**

How can I keep myself and my family healthy?

- The measles vaccine, which is usually given with the mumps and rubella vaccines (MMR), is about 97% effective at preventing measles. There are 2 doses. One at age 12-15 months and one at age four to six years. Children who are traveling outside of the U.S. should get earlier vaccine doses, as early as six months.

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My child is older than 6 years old and did not get the MMR vaccine yet – can they still get it now?

- Yes. It is never too late for children or adults to get the measles vaccine.

What are the side effects of the MMR vaccine?

- The most common side effects of the MMR vaccine are a sore arm, fever, and rash. There are other less common side effects, such as temporary joint pain or allergic reactions.
- Please speak with your healthcare provider if you have any questions about side effects.

Are the vaccines safe? Does the vaccine cause autism?

- Every vaccine has some side effects (see above). The side effects are mild and much safer than becoming infected with measles.
- The MMR vaccine does not cause autism. There was a 1998 study that incorrectly linked the vaccine to autism, but it was later removed from the medical journal it was published in for fraud.
- Many people still hold the belief that the MMR vaccine causes autism.
- Signs of autism often begin around the age when children receive the MMR vaccine, which can cause confusion. Several studies have confirmed there is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have both confirmed that the MMR vaccine is not responsible for recent increases in the number of children with autism.
- We recommend the MMR vaccine because it is safe.

Can vitamin A prevent measles?

- Vitamin A is sometimes used as treatment for a person already sick with measles. However, eating a diet high in vitamin A or taking vitamin A supplements cannot prevent measles. In fact, eating or drinking too much vitamin A can cause liver damage, coma, birth defects, and other health problems. Talk to your healthcare provider before taking vitamin supplements or giving vitamin supplements to children. The best way to prevent measles is to make sure that all members of your family have received the MMR vaccine.

References:

- Boston Public Health Commission's Measles webpage (boston.gov/measles)
- World Health Organization (WHO) [Measles](#) webpage
- Texas Department of State Health Services [Measles Outbreak – Feb. 28, 2025](#) | [Texas DSHS](#)
- CDC [Measles, Mumps, Rubella \(MMR\) Vaccine Safety](#) | [Vaccine Safety](#) | [CDC](#)
- [Vaccines and Autism](#) | [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#)
- [History of Measles](#) | [Measles \(Rubeola\)](#) | [CDC](#)
- [Progress Toward Measles Elimination – Worldwide, 2000–2022](#) | [MMWR](#)