



Erie County
Department of
Health



Public Health
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COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

HEALTH ADVISORY #358

March 22, 2024

STAY ALERT FOR MEASLES – CASES INCREASING IN UNITED STATES

Please distribute to Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, Laboratories, Emergency Rooms, Community Health Centers, College Health Centers, and Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatric, Adolescent Medicine, Infectious Disease, and Primary Care Providers

SUMMARY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) recently issued communications to alert healthcare providers of increasing measles cases reported globally and in the United States. To enhance this messaging with local providers, the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) is sharing the following information:

- From January 1 to March 14, 2024, CDC was notified of 58 confirmed U.S. measles cases across 17 jurisdictions, including 7 outbreaks, compared to 58 total cases and 4 outbreaks reported the entire year in 2023.
- Measles is a highly contagious viral illness and can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis, and death, especially in unvaccinated persons.
- Measles typically begins with a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis, lasting 2 to 4 days before rash onset. The incubation period for measles from exposure to fever is usually about 10 days (range 7 to 12 days) while rash onset is typically visible around 14 days (range 7 to 21 days) after initial exposure.
- The virus is transmitted through 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. Individuals infected with measles are contagious from 4 days before the rash starts through 4 days afterward.
- **Healthcare providers, schools, and early childhood education providers should work to ensure their patients/students are current with the MMR vaccine.**
 - Children who are not traveling internationally should receive their first MMR dose at age 12 to 15 months and their second dose at 4 – 6 years.
 - All U.S. residents older than age 6 months without evidence of immunity who are planning to travel internationally should receive MMR vaccine prior to departure.
- Evidence of immunity includes at least one of the following:
 - Born prior to 1957; or
 - Documentation of acceptable vaccination, including dates administered:



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- 2 doses of measles-containing vaccine for children ≥ 4 years and adults at high risk for exposure transmission (i.e. healthcare personnel, international travelers and students at post-high school education institutions) with a minimum interval of 28 days from the first dose to the second dose;
- One or more doses of measles-containing vaccine administered on or after the first birthday for children ages 1 – 4 years and adults not at high risk; or
 - Laboratory evidence of immunity (positive serum measles IgG); or
 - Laboratory confirmation of disease.
- **Consider measles as a diagnosis in anyone with fever ($\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$ or 38.3°C) and a generalized maculopapular rash with cough, coryza, or conjunctivitis especially those with recent travel.**
 - **DO NOT** allow patients with suspected measles to remain in the waiting room or other common areas of the facility.
 - **NOTIFY** the emergency room if a suspected measles case needs to be sent to a hospital so that appropriate infection control precautions can be implemented upon arrival.
- **Immediately report patients with suspected measles to the Local Health Department (LHD) where the patient resides. Erie County residents should be reported to the ECDOH Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance at (716) 858-7697.**
- **Call the ECDOH when considering measles testing.** Testing includes the collection of either a nasopharyngeal swab or throat swab using VTM/UTM for RT-PCR, as well as blood serology (IgM and IgG). Urine may also contain virus so a urine sample should be collected in addition when feasible. Use of commercial laboratories for measles testing may take up to a week to obtain results. Reporting suspected cases of measles to the LHD enables access to rapid testing through the NYS Wadsworth Center Laboratory. The LHD can assist in arranging specimen collection and testing at the Wadsworth Center Laboratory.
- Refer to the below “**RESOURCES**” for additional information.

RESOURCES

CDC

General Measles Information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>

CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) from January 25, 2024:

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/newsletters/coca/2024/012524.html>

CDC Health Alert Network Measles Advisory issued March 18, 2024:



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<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2024/han00504.asp>

NYSDOH

Measles Health Advisory from February 15, 2024:

https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/measles/providers/docs/2024-02-15_health_advisory.pdf

NYS Wadsworth Center Laboratory's Measles Tip Sheet (Measles specimen collection, packaging, and shipping instructions):

https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/providers/measles/docs/testing_collection.pdf

Measles Information for Healthcare Providers:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/measles/providers/>

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary

The Erie County Department of Health does not provide medical advice. The information provided on the Erie County Department of Health website is not an attempt to practice medicine and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is for informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of your personal physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or issue. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of the content found on the Erie County Department of Health website or this correspondence.

The ECDOH Health Alert & Advisory System is an e-mail notification system designed to alert community partners about important health related information. You can sign up to receive alerts & advisories at <https://www3.erie.gov/health/form/health-alert-registration>