

**Measles case confirmed in Cedar County**

CEDAR COUNTY, MO – The Cedar County Health Department is announcing a laboratory-confirmed case of measles in an unvaccinated child resident of Cedar County. Exposure to this infection is reported to be limited, though routine public health follow-up continues. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is supporting the Cedar County Health Department in the disease investigation and advising individuals with possible exposure.

[Measles](https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/index.html) 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](https://www.cdc.gov/measles/signs-symptoms/photos.html) 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 provide 97 percent protection from measles infections. Only 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.

Health care providers can find recommendations for infection control and diagnostic testing in the [health alert issued on March 7](https://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvisories/index.php) by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. 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/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/measles/).