



WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

333 E. Washington St., Suite 1100
PO Box 2003
West Bend, WI 53095-2003

Phone: 262-335-4462

Fax: 262-335-4705

www.co.washington.wi.us/chn

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From: Joni Whitehouse, Interim Health Officer
To: Washington County Schools and Child Care Centers

Measles Outbreaks in the U.S.! Is your family protected?

Measles has now been confirmed in 17 states. Currently there are no confirmed cases in Wisconsin or Washington County. However, at the time of this writing, there are two suspect cases in the state.

Measles is a serious disease. It generally starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes and sore throat followed by a rash that spreads all over the body. Roughly 3 out of 10 people will develop one or more complications including pneumonia, ear infections, meningitis and death.

Measles spreads very easily! When someone with measles coughs or sneezes, tiny particles are distributed into the air and land on surfaces. These can remain in the air and live on surfaces for up to two hours. Simply breathing this air is enough to become infected.

If you think you or your child may have measles, stay home and call ahead to schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider. Tell them why you are calling. Do NOT walk into an emergency room or urgent care center.

Unvaccinated adults and children will be excluded from work, school and/or child care if a confirmed measles case occurs in a specific setting. The exclusion period remains in effect until 21 days have passed without any new cases. Based on student immunization records, there are many school age children in Washington County who are not fully immunized with Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR). Most adults born in or before 1957 probably had measles as children and are presumed to be immune. Those born after 1957 should check their records or may have a blood test to see if they are immune.

MMR is a very safe and effective vaccine. About 99% of people who receive two doses develop lifelong immunity to measles. (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/meas.html>)

- Children should receive their first dose of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months of age with a second dose at 4-6 years of age.
- If you or your children need to be vaccinated, contact your health care provider as soon as possible to make an appointment.
- Families without health insurance may be eligible for free vaccine. Please call the Washington County Health Department (262) 335-4462 to arrange an appointment.
- If measles cases do occur, being vaccinated within 72 hours of exposure can prevent the disease.

For more information about measles go to: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/measles.htm> or call Washington County Health Department at 262-335-4462 and ask to speak to the Nurse of the day.