



Will County Health Department

501 Ella Ave, Joliet, IL 60433

(815)727-8480

www.willcountyhealth.org

MEASLES: FACT SHEET FOR SCHOOLS AND DAY CARE CENTERS

Ten cases of measles have been confirmed in Illinois, and the number is likely to increase. Currently there are no cases confirmed in Will County, but due to the presence of measles in our region, we are providing you with information to help control and prevent the spread of measles in your facility.

What is measles?

Measles is a serious, highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus.

How is it spread?

The virus is spread easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes or by direct contact with infected nose or throat secretions. The virus remains active and contagious on infected surfaces and in the air for up to two hours. People with measles are contagious from four days before through four days after rash onset.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles start with a high fever, runny nose, cough, red watery eyes, and sore throat and is followed by a rash that starts on the face and neck and then spreads downward on the rest of the body. Complications from measles are more common in young children and adults and include pneumonia, ear infections, diarrhea and rarely encephalitis and death.

How long to symptoms last?

Symptoms usually appear 7-14 days after exposure to the virus; however, the incubation period ranges from 7-21 days. The rash usually appears about 14 days after exposure.

Should a person with measles stay home?

Measles is very contagious, so stay home from school, social activities and work from the time when symptoms are first noticed until four days after the rash appears.

Can measles be prevented?

Measles can be prevented with measles vaccine. The measles vaccine is administered as MMR, a combination vaccine that provides protection against measles, mumps, and rubella. All children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine. The first dose is recommended at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. (During a measles outbreak, children may receive the second dose as soon as four weeks after the first dose, no matter how old they are.)

All adults born during or after 1957 should receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine unless they have documented evidence of measles immunity or disease. Talk with your healthcare provider to determine if you need the vaccine.



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What should be done if someone is exposed to measles?

A person who was potentially exposed and is experiencing symptoms should call their healthcare provider **before** going to the clinic or emergency department. The Will County Health Department should also be notified by calling (815)727-8481. If the person has not been vaccinated, measles vaccine may prevent disease if given within 72 hours of exposure. Immune globulin may prevent or lessen the severity of measles if given within six days of exposure.

What should schools/child care centers do now?

School nurses/child care providers should review the immunization records of the children and identify those who are not up-to-date with their MMR vaccine. It is recommended that parents be contacted and advised to vaccinate their children if there is not a medical contraindication. The parents should be informed that if their child is not vaccinated and a case of measles occurs in the school, their child will be excluded until 21 days after rash onset in the last case of measles.

What is recommended if a case of measles occurs among employees or attendees at a school or child care facility?

Persons with suspected or confirmed measles should be excluded from school or child care centers until 4 days have passed since rash onset (that is they can return on the fifth day after the day of rash onset) if not immunocompromised.

All students and staff born in or after 1957 who cannot provide adequate evidence of immunity should be vaccinated unless there is a valid contraindication. Exposed persons receiving their second MMR dose and previously unvaccinated persons receiving their first dose as part of the outbreak control program may be immediately readmitted to school. However, these individuals should be monitored for signs and symptoms of measles.

If a person without evidence of measles immunity chooses not to be vaccinated or is unable to be vaccinated due to medical reasons, that individual should be excluded from school or child care until 21 days after rash onset in the last case of measles.

For questions or to report a case of measles, please contact the Will County Health Department at (815)727-8481. More information on measles and vaccination is available at: www.cdc.gov. or www.dphillinois.gov.