



School Health Nurse FAQs About Measles

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools on actions to take now, and in the event that a case of measles is identified in your school building. Measles in schools can be serious to health and disruptive to learning. A single case of measles is a public health priority. Vaccination is the best protection against measles. If you have questions regarding any portion of the information provided, please reach out to Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County's Measles Reporting Line at 937-225-5991.

What is considered acceptable evidence of immunity to measles?

Acceptable presumptive evidence of immunity against measles includes at least one of the following:

- Written documentation of adequate vaccination
- Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Laboratory confirmation of measles (verbal history of measles does not count)
- Birth before 1957

What should individuals do if they are unsure whether they are immune to measles?

If individuals are unsure whether they're immune to measles, they should first try to find vaccination records or documentation of measles immunity. Self-reported doses of vaccine without written documentation are not acceptable.

If written documentation of measles immunity cannot be located or will not be available due to circumstances, an individual is considered susceptible and should receive age-appropriate vaccination with measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. There is no harm in getting another dose of MMR vaccine for those who may already be immune to measles (or mumps or rubella). Another option is to have a healthcare provider test order a blood test (serology) to determine whether an individual is immune. If serology testing demonstrates immunity, no additional vaccine is recommended. If serology testing shows no immunity, or is indeterminate, MMR vaccine should be given.

What does the term measles "exposure" mean?

Exposure means sharing the same airspace as a person infectious with measles. Because a person with measles is infectious even before a rash appears, measles exposure may occur by unknowingly being in the same room, home, office, or waiting room with someone who has measles or by being there up to 2 hours after the person with measles has left.

How is measles diagnosed?

Laboratory testing is ordered when a patient is showing signs and symptoms of measles. The determination to test for measles is made by clinical providers in consultation with public health. Healthcare providers collect both a blood sample and a swab from the nose or the throat from patients suspected to have measles for processing at the state laboratory.

I was born prior in 1957, do I need proof of immunity?

No, just a valid birth certificate for proof of birth year. Most persons born before 1957 are likely to have been infected naturally and may be considered to be immune. People born before 1957 who work in a healthcare facility are at increased risk for exposure to measles, and vaccination with 2 doses of MMR should be considered, particularly during a measles outbreak.

If I've had both measles vaccine doses, could I still get measles, or be a "carrier"?

No vaccine is 100% effective. Very few people—about three out of 100—who get two doses of measles vaccine will still get measles if exposed to the virus. Experts aren't sure why. It could be that their immune systems didn't respond as well as they should have to the vaccine. For this reason, everyone who has been exposed to measles should self-monitor for symptoms, for 3 weeks following a measles exposure.

Which people are at higher risk for measles complications?

- Infants and children aged <5 years
- Adults aged >20 years
- Pregnant women
- People with compromised immune systems, such as from leukemia and HIV infection

What are the differences in "exclusion", and "quarantine"? Can I still be quarantined and attend school from home?

Quarantine means staying at home and away from others. People who are quarantined must stay away from all public places, including daycare/school/work, group and social activities, sports and recreation events and public places like cinemas and shopping malls. Quarantine separates people who were exposed to a contagious disease and are in the time period where they could still get sick from it. People who were exposed to measles may spread measles to others even before they have symptoms themselves. Quarantine helps prevent measles from spreading in the community. For measles, quarantine is 21 - 28 days from exposure to a person with measles.

School Exclusion is a State of Ohio rule that applies to School Districts that requires their individual K-12 schools to exclude unvaccinated students from school for 21 days from the last reported case of measles in that school. The exclusion period is done for the protection of the unvaccinated student, is required by the State of Ohio and is not optional for the school or the students. School exclusion does not apply to unvaccinated staff or faculty, but the quarantine period does apply. It should be noted that if there are multiple cases of the measles at a particular school, the student's exclusion might be significantly extended beyond 21 days, since the 21-day time period would reset with the identification of each individual new case. When a student is excluded from school, this exclusion also includes all before and after school activities including childcare, clubs, and sports.

I'm pregnant, can I receive the measles vaccine?

NO. MMR vaccines should not be administered to people known to be pregnant or attempting to become pregnant. Because of the theoretical risk to the fetus when the mother receives a live virus vaccine, people capable of bearing children should be counseled to avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after receipt of MMR vaccine. Pregnant individuals who are exposed to measles, and do not have documentation of immunity, may receive immune globulin, a medication which may help decrease the risk of complications, if given soon after exposure.

If I'm pregnant, am exposed to measles, and receive immune globulin, will I need to be in quarantine?

Individuals who receive measles immune globulin need to be in quarantine at home for 28 days.

Do measles lab titer results expire?

No. Measles lab titers are measures of immunity from a blood test (serology). Measles lab titer results do not expire. Titer results should show patient name/information, lab/doctor's information, date of collection, name of test, the values used in interpreting the results, and the results.

Can staff/students use physician records of historical vaccines of their patients for proof of immunity?

Yes.

Where can I obtain my shot records as an adult?

School faculty should be able to obtain their student shot records from the schools they attended, if the school is no longer operational, check that county's Board of Education for the shot records as these are a permanent part of every student's school records.

What should I be doing now as the school nurse?

Begin gathering Line list for student/staff Waivers, and review school nurse clinic cleaning protocols/alternate clinic space for suspect cases.

When can a student or staff member with measles return to school?

The student or staff member who is infected with measles must **isolate** – stay at home away from others and away from all public places, including daycare, school, work, social activities, sports, recreation events, all extracurricular activities, and public places like cinemas and shopping malls. **Students and staff who are in isolation must not be allowed in the school building until 4 days have passed since their rash began, they have been without a fever for at least 24 hours, and they are physically able to return to school or work.** While in isolation, individuals with measles or suspected measles must stay at home and away from others.