



## Measles Epidemiological Background for the United States

Updated as of September 19, 2024

Measles, a highly contagious viral disease, has been experiencing a concerning resurgence [globally](#) and in the [United States](#) in recent years. Despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine, outbreaks continue to occur, primarily due to gaps in vaccination coverage and the virus's high transmissibility. In 2019, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) reported a significant increase in measles cases worldwide, with 869,770 cases reported in that year alone, the highest number since 1996. [This trend has worsened following the COVID-19 pandemic](#) due to disruptions in vaccination efforts and surveillance activities combined with increased vaccine hesitancy, misinformation about vaccine safety, inadequate access to healthcare services, conflict, and humanitarian crises.

In the United States, measles was declared [eliminated in 2000](#) due to high vaccination rates and effective public health measures; however, the US has experienced several outbreaks since then, particularly among under- and unvaccinated communities due to introduction from international travelers. The [most notable recent peak of measles transmission](#) in the US occurred in 2019, with 1,274 confirmed cases across 32 states, the highest number since 1992. These outbreaks were [primarily linked to travelers](#) who brought measles into the US from other countries where large outbreaks were occurring, and the virus then spread in communities with unvaccinated individuals.

In 2024, there have been [13 measles outbreaks in the US](#) affecting a total of 32 jurisdictions, as of September 19. Several significant measles outbreaks have occurred this year in states, such as [Florida](#), [Illinois](#), [Oregon](#), and [Minnesota](#), highlighting ongoing vulnerabilities in vaccination coverage and public health preparedness. The outbreaks in Florida and Oregon spread across several counties, primarily affecting unvaccinated individuals and raising concerns about low measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination rates. The outbreaks in Illinois and Minnesota were primarily centered around a [Chicago migrant shelter](#) and unvaccinated children in the [Somali community](#) in the Twin Cities metro area, respectively. These outbreaks present unique challenges for contact tracing and containment, underscore the importance of targeted vaccination efforts for vulnerable communities, and highlight the need for robust public health infrastructure to respond quickly to emerging infectious disease threats. All these outbreaks, plus 9 others reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this year, prompted calls for strengthening immunization programs and public health preparedness at local and national levels. State and local health departments continue to report ongoing measles transmission, highlighting the need for continued attention.



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