

Addressing Schools' Concerns about Measles

1. Why are there more Measles cases in the news lately?

Most people in the U.S. are protected against measles through vaccination. The U.S. has seen more cases than usual because fewer people have gotten the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine or have travelled to or from places where measles is more common.

2. Does Measles pose a health risk to schools?

Measles is a serious disease that spreads very easily in people who have never had measles or measles vaccine. So, measles is a health risk for students and staff that have never had measles or their MMR vaccine. Higher numbers of unvaccinated students and staff mean higher risk of diseases that spread from person-to-person, like the measles.

3. What are the symptoms of Measles?

Measles can cause these symptoms:

- High Fever (101°F or higher)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red watery eyes
- A rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body

Measles can cause complications, such as ear infections and diarrhea. It can also cause serious illness, such as pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling around the brain), and even death.

4. What should schools do if someone on campus has the Measles?

Schools should follow these guidelines when students or staff...

Are Confirmed or Suspected of Having Measles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude from school or child care for 4 days after the rash starts and until they are physically able to return to school or child care setting
Never Had Measles or MMR Vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude from school or child care for 21 days after exposure to a sick person or until an immunity test confirms they are protected



Key Messages:

- Measles is a virus that lives in the nose and throat. It spreads easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Measles is a health risk for students and staff that have never had measles or the MMR vaccine.
- Vaccination is the best way to prevent getting and spreading measles.
- Public Health is taking steps to prevent the spread of measles in LA County.

Where can the public go for more information?

**Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health**
Dial 2-1-1

**California Department of
Public Health**
916-558-1784

**Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention**
800-CDC-INFO
800-232-4636

CDCP-IP-0016-01 (02/02/15)

5. How can schools prevent the spread of Measles?

Follow these tips to keep your school healthy:

Ask families and staff to know their vaccination status. Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep from getting and spreading the measles. People should get the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine if they haven't been vaccinated or don't know if they got the MMR vaccine before.

Ask families to call their doctor first. People who don't know their vaccination status or may have had contact with someone with the measles should call their doctor to have a test to check for measles immunity or to get the MMR vaccine. If they're ill, they should call the doctor before heading to their office. This prevents the spread of measles in doctors' offices.

Ask staff to know the signs of measles. Teachers and school personnel should know the symptoms of measles so they can identify them and take action when students and staff may be ill.

Ask students and staff to stay home when they're sick. This along with covering coughs and sneezes with a sleeve or tissue, washing hands often with soap and water, and not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, help stop people from getting and spreading respiratory diseases.

6. Where can families get vaccinated?

Families can call their doctor to get an MMR vaccine, which may be covered by insurance. They may also be able to get vaccinated at a pharmacy or at a clinic offering no or low-cost vaccinations. Call 2-1-1 or visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip to find a nearby clinic.

7. How should schools address families' concerns about Measles?

Emphasize that measles can be prevented with the MMR vaccine. Making sure their family's immunizations are up-to-date, can help them protect themselves, their loved ones, and their community.

Let families know that the LA County Department Public Health works to stop people from getting and spreading disease by:

- Investigating all measles cases in the county
- Identifying people who may have had contact with someone with measles
- Educating health care providers regarding measles symptoms, diagnosis, and reporting
- Taking safety measures, like giving the MMR vaccine or restricting participation in school or work, for unvaccinated people who may have come in contact with measles
- Reporting cases to the California Department of Public Health so they can see the impact measles is having across the state