

**T**he Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has reported confirmed cases of measles in Los Angeles County. While the number of confirmed cases in Los Angeles is low, the potential for exposure to measles is increased at this time.

## WHAT IS MEASLES AND HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing. Measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed. A person infected with measles can spread the disease to others before he or she has symptoms. Non-immunized individuals that come in contact with an infected person are at the highest risk of contracting the measles virus.



There may be circumstances where the LA County Department of Public Health will issue a health officer order to quarantine individuals who have come in contact with known measles cases and don't have proof of vaccination or immunity.

Individuals under a health officer order may be restricted from school, work, and other locations during a period of up to twenty-one days.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MEASLES?

Common symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Three to five days after the onset of these symptoms a rash will occur on the infected individual.<sup>1</sup> It usually begins as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spreads downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet.



Measles can lead to serious illnesses, hospitalization, and even death. Serious illnesses include diarrhea, ear infection, and brain damage. Pregnant women, infants, young children, and persons with a weakened immune system are at the most risk for serious illnesses.

## IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR MEASLES?

There is currently no treatment for measles other than supportive care.

## WHAT I NEED TO KNOW

- Measles is a highly contagious virus. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing.
- **Vaccination will protect you against measles.** If you've had one vaccination shot you are 93% protected against measles and if you've had two vaccination shots, you are 97% protected.
- Are you aware of your own immune status? If not, please consult with your personal healthcare provider.
- Contact [biosafety@usc.edu](mailto:biosafety@usc.edu) or (323) 442-2000 for more information.

## HOW CAN MEASLES BE PREVENTED?

**Vaccination** - Measles can be prevented with the MMR vaccine. The vaccine protects against three diseases: measles, mumps, and rubella. The MMR vaccine is very safe and effective. Two doses of the MMR vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles; one dose is about 93% effective.<sup>2</sup> **NOTE:** Most people in the US are protected against measles through vaccination.



**Post-Exposure** – Vaccination of unvaccinated individuals after an exposure may reduce their risk of infection. In some cases, other treatments are recommended for those at highest risk of serious infection. If you are exposed and have not been vaccinated, call your healthcare provider immediately.

## IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS OR HAVE BEEN EXPOSED

Individuals should contact their healthcare provider by phone before going in if they develop measles symptoms, so measures can be taken to prevent possible spread to others in the provider's waiting room. They should also tell their doctor or healthcare provider if they traveled internationally or had international visitors in the last twenty-one days or had exposure to another person with measles.



<sup>1</sup> CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/signs-symptoms.html>

<sup>2</sup> CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccination.html>