



MEASLES GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATIONS - DAYCARES

March 17, 2025

BACKGROUND:

The states of Texas and New Mexico are experiencing a Measles outbreak in the South Plains region (Far West Texas) and east of New Mexico in Lea County. The number of confirmed measles cases continues to grow and about 20% of such cases have required hospitalization and there have been 2 deaths reported so far. The vast majority of affected individuals have not been vaccinated against Measles, or their immunization status is unknown.

MEASLES KEY FACTS

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness that typically begins with fever, cough, coryza (runny nose), and conjunctivitis (pink eye), followed by a characteristic rash. Measles can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), and death. The virus is transmitted by direct contact with infectious droplets or by airborne spread when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Measles virus can remain infectious in the air and on surfaces for up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves an area. Infected people are contagious from 4 days before the rash starts through 4 days afterward. The incubation period for measles, from exposure to fever, is usually about 7–10 days, and from exposure to rash onset is usually about 10–14 days (with a range of 7 to 21 days).

A complete immunization schedule with 2 doses of Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine is 97% effective and confers appropriate long-lasting immunity against Measles. People considered high risk for Measles infection are infants <12 mo of age, pregnant women and individuals who are severely immunosuppressed.

MMR Vaccination Schedule:

1st Dose: 12-15 months of age

2nd Dose: 4-6 years of age

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STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE A MEASLES CASE:

- Identify all children claiming a vaccination exemption
- Identify all children with unknown* vaccination status
- Identify and notify parents of any children who are not up to date on MMR vaccination schedule (≥ 12 mo but ≤ 4 years of age: 1 dose of MMR; ≥ 4 yrs of age having 2 doses of MMR vaccine)
- Have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available for evaluation of any suspect Measles cases
- Review donning and doffing of PPE procedure
- Identify a well-ventilated space/room for isolation of suspect cases
- Disseminate and provide Measles information materials to parents and staff

* Unknown vaccination status refers to those students that daycare does not have proof of a complete MMR vaccination schedule for age.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A SUSPECT MEASLES CASE:

Consider Measles in children with:

- Fever $\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$ (38.3°C) **AND**
- **RASH** starting at the hairline and spreading downward.
- With also cough, runny nose, or conjunctivitis
- Recent travel history to an area experience measles outbreak (west Texas, east New Mexico or abroad)

IMMEDIATELY CALL the City of El Paso Department of Public Health-Epidemiology upon **SUSPECTING** a potential measles case.

24/7 Reporting Line: 915-212-6520.

Daycare Staff must report suspected or confirmed Measles cases immediately according to Texas Law (Tex. Health and Safety Code §81.042; Tex Admin. Code §97.2 & §97.3), **do not wait for confirmation.**

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Isolation of any suspect cases:

- Immediately separate anyone with suspected Measles into a separate, well-ventilated area/room until parents come to pick up child.

Exclusion of Children and Staff:

Exclusion means a child is **not allowed** to attend daycare or any of its activities. All children attending daycare without documentation of appropriate doses of MMR vaccine for age* must be excluded from daycare regardless of their personal exposure to measles or documentation of an exemption or waiver on file for a medical, religious, or philosophical reason.

* Appropriate doses of MMR vaccine for age:

- ❖ ≥ 12 mo but ≤ 4 years of age: **1 dose of MMR vaccine**;
- ❖ ≥ 4 yrs of age: **2 doses of MMR vaccine**

If a case of measles is identified in your facility, all children without documentation of appropriate doses of MMR vaccine for age (unvaccinated, unknown vaccination status, or have an incomplete MMR immunization series) **are required to be immediately excluded from daycare.**

Unvaccinated children or staff including those who have a medical or other exemption to vaccination, must be excluded from daycare through 21 days after the onset of the last known case of Measles in the facility. It should be noted that if there are multiple cases of measles at a particular daycare, the child's exclusion might be significantly extended beyond 21 days, since the 21-day period would reset with the identification of each individual new case.

If an exposed staff can produce alternate evidence of immunity, such as a blood test showing antibodies to measles (also called an IgG antibody test), exclusion of staff may be downgraded to symptom monitoring instead, following discussion with DPH Epidemiology.

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When children are allowed to return to daycare:

- **Confirmed cases:** Stay home until **4 days after rash onset**. (Tex. Admin. Code §97.7 (a)(15))
- **Suspected cases:** Stay home until measles is ruled out by a U.S. licensed healthcare professional.
- **Children with 0 doses of MMR:** If the excluded child receives one documented dose of MMR, they may return to daycare immediately. A second dose of MMR will need to be received at least 28 days later, even if the child is younger than 4 years of age. (These children will need to receive 1 dose of MMR vaccine after the age of 4 years to complete the series).
- **Children with one dose of measles vaccine (children \geq 4 yrs of age):** If the child receives a second documented dose of MMR, they may return to daycare immediately upon daycare receipt of documentation of the second dose.
- **Children with unknown doses of measles vaccine:** If the child receives one documented dose of MMR vaccine, they may return to daycare immediately. A second dose of MMR will need to be received at least 28 days later, even if the child is younger than 4 years of age (these children will need to receive 1 dose of MMR vaccine after the age of 4 years to complete the series) or bring proof of complete MMR vaccination series for age.

Cleaning and Disinfection:

Appropriate cleaning and disinfection with an EPA-approved solution that has effective virucidal activity is recommended after a case of Measles present in the daycare setting. The isolation room should be well ventilated, and all surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected, properly disposing of contaminated items such as tissue paper and used PPE items.

Notification to Parents:

Appropriate notification to parents should be provided in a timely manner. The Daycare Public Information Office may coordinate with DPH Public Information Officer (PIO) for a joint message.

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