

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 20, 2024

CONTACT: Oneida County Health Department, 715-369-6111

Cases of Measles in the Midwest: What You Need to Know

Do I need to worry about measles?

Almost every state surrounding Wisconsin is currently reporting cases of measles. As of March 14th, the CDC reports there are 58 cases nationwide. Measles is highly contagious, which means we could see cases climb quickly.

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus that spreads easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can remain in the air and infect people for up to two hours after an infected person has left the area. Because measles is so contagious, it is important to stay away from work, school, and other social activities. If you start to notice symptoms of measles that are outlined below call your doctor immediately. Treatment includes rest, fluids, and medicine to treat specific symptoms, like fever.

Common symptoms of measles:

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Runny nose
- Watery eyes
- Skin rash (typically starts around the head and spreads to the rest of the body)

Can measles be prevented?

The measles vaccine is a safe and effective way to prevent measles. Two doses are 97% effective at preventing measles if a person is exposed to the virus. One dose is about 93% effective. One dose is usually given at 12-15 months of age, and a second dose is given before the start of kindergarten at 4-6 years of age.

You can check your immunization records online at the Wisconsin Immunization Registry or call your health care provider to make sure you have received all recommended doses. Acceptable evidence of immunity against measles includes at least one of the following: written documentation of adequate vaccination, laboratory evidence of immunity, laboratory confirmation of prior measles, or birth before 1957. If you have not received vaccination or have no evidence of immunity to measles, a dose of MMR is recommended. In some special situations, a second dose of MMR vaccine is recommended which can be discussed with your healthcare provider.

If you aren't vaccinated and are exposed to measles, contact your healthcare provider immediately for guidance on determining your quarantine period as this may impact being able to work or attend school. Making sure you are up to date with your measles vaccination can help you avoid not only illness, but also absences.



P: (715) 369-6111
F: (715) 369-6112
ochd@oneidacountywi.gov
OneidaCountyPublicHealth.org

How concerned should you and your family be about measles?

As many as 1 in 5 unvaccinated people who contract measles end up hospitalized with complications. Severe complications can include ear infection, pneumonia, and encephalitis (brain inflammation).

The Oneida County Health Department encourages you to understand the symptoms of measles, know your family's measles vaccination status, and get vaccinated if you aren't already. We offer vaccines at no cost to uninsured or underinsured adults and children. You can make an appointment by calling 715-369-6111.

XXX