

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) wants to notify you that a case of measles was confirmed in a Kent County resident. This marks the county's first confirmed measles case since 2013.

The number of measles cases continues to increase across the U.S. Over 480 measles cases have been confirmed across 20 states since January 1, 2025, surpassing the total number of cases recorded in 2024. As spring break approaches and many families prepare to travel, we wanted to share some health and travel guidance.

### **What is measles?**

Measles is a respiratory infection that spreads through droplets in the air when a person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Symptoms typically begin 7–14 days after exposure, though they can surface as late as 21 days after exposure and may include:

- High fever (may spike to over 104°F)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums, and roof of mouth (Koplik Spots) 2-3 days after symptoms begin
- A rash that is red, raised, and blotchy; usually starts on the face, spreads to the trunk, arms, and legs 3-5 days after symptoms begin

### **How contagious is measles?**

Measles is so contagious that 90% of unvaccinated people who are exposed to it will become infected. The virus can stay in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves, continuing to infect others. People with measles are contagious before they know they are sick. An infected person can spread measles easily to others four days before a rash appears, and they are still contagious four days after the rash appears.

### **How severe is measles?**

Measles can lead to serious complications, including hospitalization, long-term illness, and death. About one in five people who get measles will be hospitalized. One in 20 children who contract measles will develop pneumonia, and up to three children who contract measles in 1,000 will die.

## What are the best prevention methods, particularly ahead of spring break travel?

- **Vaccination:** The measles vaccine is highly effective, safe, and provides long-lasting protection. A single dose of measles vaccine is about 93% effective at preventing measles, while two doses are about 97% effective.
  - **Vaccine Recommendations for Children:** Children should have at least 1 dose of the MMR vaccine at 12-15 months of age and a second dose between the ages of 4 and 6 years
  - **Vaccine Recommendations for Adults:** Parents and guardians should also receive 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine if they lack evidence of immunity.
- **Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and avoid contact with those who are ill.
- **Check Travel Advisories:** Be aware of any health advisories in your destination.

## What should I do if my child is experiencing symptoms?

If your child does develop a rash with a fever, they should not attend school. Anyone experiencing symptoms is urged to **call their healthcare provider** before seeking in-person care to prevent further spread. KCHD can be reached **Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.** at **616-632-7228**. Individuals can **call 2-1-1 for support during weekends and evenings**.

## Where can people find more information on the current state of measles in the U.S.?

- The latest updates and data on measles in the U.S. can be found at [CDC Measles Cases and Outbreaks](#).
- For more information on measles:
  - Find updates for the state of Michigan and the latest guidance at [MDHHS](#).
  - See also recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics [What Parents Need to Know](#).
- For more information on KCHD clinic hours and locations, visit the KCHD website at [KCHD Clinic Hours](#).

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the KCHD CD Unit at 616-632-7228.

Thank you for your attention to this matter