

SPECIAL EDITION**Epi Update for Friday, May 23, 2025**

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

Items for this week's EPI Update include

- First case of measles reported in Iowa
- Health care providers remain vigilant for measles
- Infographic: What Iowans should know about measles

First case of measles reported in Iowa

Iowa HHS is reporting a confirmed case of measles in central Iowa in an unvaccinated adult. The case tested positive through the State Hygienic Laboratory and is the first confirmed case of measles in Iowa this year, and the first case in Iowa since 2019.

Iowa is among 31 other United States jurisdictions in an evolving measles outbreak that has been responsible for 1,024 confirmed measles cases and 3 confirmed measles deaths this year. A thorough investigation has been completed. Public health officials will be reaching out to identified contacts, and no widespread public exposure is anticipated.

"The best time to prevent measles is before an exposure occurs and the best tool we have is getting the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine," said Dr. Robert Kruse, State Medical Director. "Getting vaccinated not only protects you but also protects people in your community who can't get vaccinated, like infants too young to begin the series and those who are immunosuppressed. We ask Iowans to review their vaccination records and medical records to ensure they are protected and to reach out to their health care provider if they have questions."

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness that is spread through the air when an infectious person coughs, sneezes, or breathes. Symptoms of measles include fever, cough, red/watery eyes, runny nose, and a rash. Measles can cause severe complications. About 1 in 10 people in the US who get measles will be hospitalized, and 1 to 3 out of 1,000 children with measles will die even with good medical care.

The MMR vaccine series is 97% effective against measles. The first MMR dose is given at 12-15 months, and the second dose is given at 4-6 years. Currently 84% of 2-year-olds in Iowa are vaccinated, which is below the 95% threshold required to prevent outbreaks. There are no age limits for Iowans on Medicaid who wish to receive preventative MMR vaccinations.

If you think you have been exposed to a measles case and have symptoms, call your medical provider or nearest emergency room ahead of time and tell them that you have been exposed to measles and have symptoms before arriving.

For more information about measles, visit

hhs.iowa.gov/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/disease-information.

Health care providers remain vigilant for measles

Measles is characterized by a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis (the three “C”s), followed by a maculopapular rash that spreads from the head to the trunk to the lower extremities. Consider measles in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible symptoms, especially if they recently traveled to an area impacted by an outbreak or were exposed to a person with febrile rash illness.

Health care providers who suspect measles should immediately notify CADE while the patient is still at the health care facility by calling 515-242-5935 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours. During the consultation CADE epidemiologists will ask for patient information including the progression of symptoms, vaccination status and ask about any known exposures. This information will help the epidemiologists to determine the testing priority for each patient. CADE will then help facilitate measles PCR testing at Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) free of charge with a 24-48 hour turnaround time. Sending measles testing to reference laboratories may significantly delay results, and therefore time-sensitive public health actions, if necessary.

Health care providers should routinely evaluate patient vaccination status and promote measles containing vaccines (MMR or MMRV) for patients who do not have presumptive evidence of immunity.

For updates from CDC about measles in the U.S., visit www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html.

Infographic: What Iowans should know about measles

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What Iowans should know about Measles

INITIAL SYMPTOMS
7-21 days post exposure

- High fever (may spike to >104°F)
- Cough
- Red eyes
- Runny nose
- Small bluish spots surrounded by red region on the inside of cheek

RASH
3-5 days after fever onset

A red, blotchy rash begins on the face at the hairline and progresses downward and outward towards the hands and feet.

TRAVEL
21 days before onset

- Have you traveled anywhere in the last 21 days where measles cases have been reported?
- Have you had contact with someone who has measles?

MMR VACCINATION
The best way to prevent measles is to get vaccinated.

- 1 dose is **92-95%** effective against measles
- 2 doses are **97-99%** effective against measles

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE MEASLES

- Call your health care provider and tell them you may have measles. They will give you instructions on how to be seen safely.
- You should **not** sit in the waiting room or come through the main entrance because if you do have measles anyone in that area who is not vaccinated (like babies) will get sick.
- Stay home until you see your health care provider.

If you have questions about measles, call your local public health department or Iowa HHS at 1-800-362-2736

To view in full size, visit hhs.iowa.gov/media/12367/download?inline.

Have a healthy and happy week!
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
800-362-2736