

# Preparing for and Responding to Measles in Your School

Measles can spread quickly in a school setting and can cause serious illness. Students and staff that have not been vaccinated are at high risk for severe disease, especially students 5 years of age and younger, pregnant people, and people with weakened immune systems. The most important step you can take is to ensure students and staff are vaccinated with the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. The MMR vaccine is safe and effective at preventing measles disease.

## How to be prepared

- Ensure students are vaccinated with the MMR vaccine or have a legal exemption on file.
- Encourage staff to confirm they have received the MMR vaccine or have immunity to measles. If they know they aren't immune to measles encourage them to receive the MMR vaccine.
- Save immunization and exemption records for all students and make sure these records are current and easy to look up.
  - [MIIC and Schools \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/participate/school.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/participate/school.html) is a tool that can assist you when gathering immunization records.
- Inform families of unvaccinated children and unvaccinated staff that they may need to stay home for up to 21 days each time they are near someone who has measles.
- Know the signs and symptoms of measles.
  - [Measles \(Rubeola\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/measlesfacts.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/measlesfacts.html)

## Steps to take if there has been a person with measles at your school

Schools are required to let the Minnesota Department of Health know right away if someone with measles has been at their school.

1. Contact MDH if someone with measles may have been at your school by calling **651-201-5414** or **877-676-5414**.
2. Follow **all** instructions given to you by MDH or Local Public Health (LPH) staff.
3. Review the attendance records for all students and staff that attended your school during the time the person with measles may have been at your school and track the:
  - Student/staff first and last name
  - Parents' first and last names (only for students)
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - Date of birth
  - Classroom of the student/staff
  - MMR vaccination date (if applicable)
4. If MDH has confirmed the person did have measles and they were sick while at your school, you may need to share the information gathered during step 3 with MDH or LPH.
5. Let MDH know if anyone else who has been in your school becomes sick with measles.

6. Enforce the public health recommendations for people that MDH has determined may have been near a person with measles and could potentially spread measles to other people.

Depending on the situation, people who have **not** been vaccinated with **any** doses of MMR and have been near someone with measles may be asked to remain home for up to 3 weeks.

## Why MDH can ask for this information

- Because measles spreads easily and rapidly, and can result in severe disease, it is a serious health threat and is an immediately reportable disease in Minnesota.
- MDH investigates all suspected cases of measles, including identifying any contacts of a measles case that are at risk of developing measles and determining necessary control measures. This disease investigation authority is found in [Minnesota Rule 4605.7500](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7500/) ([www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7500/](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7500/)).
- Schools and child care settings are required to report under the communicable disease reporting rules found in Chapter 4605 of the Minnesota Rules.
  - The law requires reporting of both cases and suspected cases, and anyone who had contact with a person who had measles would be a suspect case and need to be followed by MDH.
  - Measles is specifically listed as an immediately reportable disease under [Minn. R. 4605.7040](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7040/) ([www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7040/](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7040/)).

It is important that public health gets information as soon as possible so that it can notify families of the exposure, let families know what they should do if they were not vaccinated at the time of exposure, and let families know how they can contact MDH and seek care if they develop symptoms. If public health can't get the above information in a timely way, public health may consider other options to obtain the necessary information.

## Additional resources

- [MIIC and Schools \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/participate/school.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/participate/school.html)
- [School Immunization Reporting \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/ed/school.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/ed/school.html)
- [Measles Information \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/basics.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/basics.html)
- [Chapter 4605 Communicable Disease Reporting \(www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605/\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605/)

Minnesota Department of Health  
PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-203-5503  
[www.health.state.mn.us/immunize](http://www.health.state.mn.us/immunize)

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.