



Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
**HEALTH ALERT NETWORK**  
**Advisory**

NEBRASKA  
Good Life. Great Mission.  
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Healthcare providers, Emergency departments, and public health

FROM: Thomas J. Safranek, MD      Blake Hendrickson, MPH  
State Epidemiologist      VPD Epidemiologist  
402-471-2937 PHONE      402-471-6450 PHONE  
402-471-3601 FAX      402-471-3601 FAX

RE: Measles outbreaks in the United States

DATE: May 3, 2019

From January 1 to May 3, 2019, 764 cases of measles were reported from at least 22 states. This is already the greatest number of cases in one calendar year since measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000. A large outbreak is ongoing in New York City and New York State, as well as multiple countries.

**NO CONFIRMED CASES HAVE OCCURRED IN NEBRASKA SINCE 2017, BUT THERE IS ONGOING RISK OF IMPORTING MEASLES FROM ELSEWHERE. IT IS VITAL TO PROMPTLY REPORT ALL SUSPECTED CASES TO YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR NEBRASKA DHHS AT (402-471-6450).**

**What should Clinicians Do?**

- **Consider measles** in patients of any age who have a **febrile rash illness AND clinically compatible symptoms (cough, coryza, and/or conjunctivitis)**. Measles rashes are red, blotchy, and maculopapular and typically start on the hairline and face and spread downwards to the rest of the body.
- **Obtain a thorough history** on such patients, including: recent exposure to anyone with a rash and fever illness, recent travel to other states and countries or contact with international travelers in the prior three weeks; and prior vaccinations with measles.
- **If you suspect measles**, isolate the patient immediately and alert the state or local health department as soon as possible. To prevent transmission in healthcare settings, airborne infection control precautions should be followed stringently. Further information is available at [http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007ip/2007ip\\_part3.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007ip/2007ip_part3.html).
- **Laboratory testing:** Obtain specimens for all suspected cases of measles. **Notify the state (402-471-6450) or local health department if you order any measles testing.**
  - PCR is the preferred diagnostic test up to 9 days after rash onset.
    - A throat swab should be collected on days 0-5 after rash onset.
    - A throat swab plus urine sample should be collected on days 6-9.
  - Specimens can be sent to the Nebraska Public Health Lab (with prior notice).
  - Measles IgM can also be helpful depending on timing and vaccine history.

CDC urges healthcare professionals to ensure that all patients are up to date on measles containing vaccines. MMR vaccination is especially important for healthcare professionals and international travelers.

- Discuss the importance of MMR vaccine with parents. When parents have questions, it does not necessarily mean they won't accept vaccines. Sometimes, they simply want *your* answers to their questions.
- Ensure all patients are up to date on MMR vaccine.
  - **Infants** 6-11 months need 1 dose of MMR vaccine before international travel.
  - **Children and teenagers** need 2 doses of MMR: the standard ACIP schedule recommends doses at 12-15 months and 4-6 years (at least 28 days apart).
  - **Adults** born during or after 1957 should have documentation of at least one dose of MMR or other evidence of measles immunity. Persons in this age group who need a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose includes:
    - Postsecondary educational students
    - International travelers
    - Healthcare personnel
    - Persons with HIV and a CD4 count  $\geq 200$  cells/ $\mu$ l for at least 6 months
    - Household or close personal contacts of immunocompromised persons with no evidence of immunity.
  - **Older adults** born before 1957 are generally considered immune to measles, mumps, and rubella. This is acceptable evidence of immunity unless they work in healthcare facilities.

#### **Share information about measles with parents and the public in your office.**

- CDC has a recent article for parents about measles that you can link to from your consumer-friendly websites: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/measles/>.
- CDC has a full suite of resources to share with parents, including printable fact sheets, posters, and printable infographics: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html>.

#### **Learn more about measles and encourage others to do the same.**

Below is information about measles that you can promote to other healthcare professionals:

- For more information, including guidelines for patient evaluation, diagnosis and management, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>.
- View TEDMED at CDC: Measles—Making a Disease Disappear conference talk from 2013: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mra7PNRJ\\_rl&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mra7PNRJ_rl&feature=youtu.be).
- Infant Immunization FAQs in English and Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html>.
- Measles fact sheet for parents in English and Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/measles.html>.

Thank you for your assistance!