



# Public Health

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# Public Health *Alert...*

February 5, 2015

## Preparing for Measles in Schools and Childcare Facilities

Public Health – Idaho North Central District (PH-INCD) would like to remind school districts that the U.S. is experiencing a large multi-state measles outbreak that started in California in December, 2014 and has spread to fourteen states and Mexico. From December 28, 2014, through January 30, 2015, 102 confirmed cases of measles linked to this outbreak have been reported to CDC. A majority of cases were reported from California. Thirteen other states, including Utah have reported cases. At this time, no source case for the outbreak has been identified. It is likely that a traveler (or more than one traveler) who was infected with measles overseas visited one or both of the Disney parks in December during their infectious period.

### Recommendations

Because of the close proximity of the states with confirmed measles cases, PH-INCD is asking local school districts to make preparations should a measles case be diagnosed in your area. At this time, PH-INCD recommends all schools identify and compile a list of students who are not fully vaccinated against measles. The State of Idaho requires all school age students to have received 2 doses of the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine before attending public school. Students who have declined the vaccine or have only received one dose of MMR are most at risk should an actual, confirmed measles exposure occur.

After exposure to measles, medical intervention must be implemented within 3-6 days in order to prevent or modify measles disease in a susceptible individual. Should a case of measles be identified in a school, the following recommendations will be made.

- The case will be isolated and not allowed to return to school until at least 4 days after the onset of rash.

- Any individuals (students or teachers in the same school/daycare and other close contacts) without proof of immunity must be identified immediately and referred for appropriate treatment. According to IDAPA 16.02.10 Section 460.04.b, "In the event of a case of measles in a day care or school, susceptible children must be excluded until adequate immunization is obtained, or the threat of further spread of the disease is contained..." PH-INCD staff will work with the school to identify the individuals and make appropriate contact.

- The school district will be asked to send out information to all non-immune students and teachers informing them of the possible exposure to measles and encouraging them to update their measles immunizations.

Further measures, intended to control an outbreak, may be recommended should sustained spread of measles be identified in a community. Recommendations to prevent non-immune students from attending school until after an outbreak is declared over may be considered if prevention measures are ineffective.

Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral illness. It begins with a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza (runny nose), conjunctivitis (pink eye), lasting 2-4 days prior to rash onset. Measles can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis, and death. Measles is transmitted by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing; infected people are contagious from 4 days before their rash starts through 4 days afterwards. After an infected person leaves a location, the virus remains viable for up to 2 hours on surfaces and in the air.

Measles is still endemic in many parts of the world, and outbreaks can occur in the U.S. when unvaccinated groups are exposed to imported measles virus. Disney and other theme parks are international attractions, and visitors come from many parts of the world, including locations where measles is endemic. The current multi-state outbreak underscores the ongoing risk of importation of measles, the need for high measles vaccine coverage, and the importance of a prompt and appropriate public health response to measles cases and outbreaks.

Measles is a reportable disease in the state of Idaho as both a SUSPECT and CONFIRMED case within 24 hours of identification. Providers are asked to contact PH-INCD if they are considering Measles as a potential diagnosis for a patient displaying symptoms consistent with Measles. Testing is available and should be performed within three days of rash onset and not more than 10 days after onset. All specimens should be collected at the same time and include serum for IgG **and** IgM testing and a throat swab for RT-PCR testing.

**To report a case or for additional information, please call Anna Olson, RN, Epidemiologist,  
Public Health – Idaho North Central District at (208) 799-3100.**