



NEWS RELEASE

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Increase in Measles Cases and Outbreaks in the U.S. and Globally *MMR Vaccine is Safe and Effective in Preventing Measles*

ATLANTA – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is urging parents to make sure their children are up to date with their measles vaccinations. Measles vaccination is important for all children to prevent measles infection and reduce the risk of community transmission, but it is especially important for families with children planning to travel outside of the United States.

Among 58 measles cases reported in the U.S. so far in 2024, 54 (93%) were linked to international travel. Most cases reported this year have been among children over the age of 12 months who had not received MMR vaccine. In Georgia, there have been two reported cases of measles in 2024. The individuals were unvaccinated, from the same family, and had traveled outside of the country.

Measles is very contagious and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The measles virus can stay in the air for up to 2 hours after an infected person is there so you can become infected by simply being in a room where an infected person once was.

Measles can be prevented with the MMR vaccine which is safe and highly effective. Two doses of MMR vaccine are 97% effective against measles, one dose is 93% effective. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends children receive their first dose of MMR vaccine between 12-15 months of age and a second dose between 4-6 years old. At least two weeks before traveling internationally, infants aged 6 to 11 months should have one dose of MMR vaccine and children aged 12 months and older should have two doses of MMR vaccine. Parents should consult with their child's healthcare provider to ensure they are up to date with their MMR vaccines and any additional vaccines that may be needed.

Measles symptoms appear 7 to 14 days (sometimes up to 21 days) after contact with the virus. Symptoms include high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes, followed by a rash of tiny, red spots that starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body. Individuals infected with measles are contagious from 4 days before the rash starts through 4 days afterward. Measles can cause serious complications, especially for babies and young children.

Individuals with symptoms of measles should contact their healthcare provider immediately. **DO NOT** go to the doctor's office, the hospital, or a public health clinic without **FIRST** calling to let them know about your symptoms. Healthcare providers who suspect measles in patients should notify public health immediately.

For more information about measles, log on to <https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/acute-disease-epidemiology/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles> or <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>. A list of countries with confirmed measles outbreaks can be found on the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/level1/measles-globe>.