



May 3, 2019

Important Message Regarding Measles

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The United States is in the middle of its worst measles outbreak since the disease was cleared from the country in 2000. There have not been any measles cases in Rhode Island from this outbreak, but there have been cases in Massachusetts and other nearby places. Most of the people catching measles in these outbreaks are children who have not had the measles vaccine. Receiving the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is the best way to be protected against catching measles. It is important to make sure everyone is protected.

A person who has not had the measles vaccine could catch the disease if exposed to a person sick with measles. A person is protected from catching measles if they have had measles infection or have been vaccinated.

To make sure your child is protected from measles, the Rhode Island Department of Health recommends you do the following:

- **Make sure your child has had two doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine.**
- **Call your child's primary care provider to schedule a vaccine appointment if needed.**
- **Share updated immunization information with your child's school nurse.**

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles starts with a fever that can get very high. Other possible symptoms:

- Cough, runny nose, and red eyes
- Rash of tiny, red spots that start at the head and spread to the rest of the body

Is it serious?

For some children, measles can lead to:

- Diarrhea
- Ear infection
- Pneumonia (a serious lung infection)
- Lifelong brain damage
- Suppressed immune system
- Deafness
- Death

How does measles spread?

Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Measles is very contagious. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, up to two hours after that person has left the room.

You can also catch measles from an infected person even before they have a measles rash. Almost everyone who has not had the MMR vaccine will get measles if they are exposed to the measles virus.