

State Health Officials Announce First 2015 Case Of Measles

Recommend checking immunization status and becoming aware of symptoms

BOSTON — The Hinton State Laboratory confirmed today the first case of measles in the Commonwealth this year, in a visiting student from Western Europe.

State officials highlighted the state's high immunization rate against measles as a key safeguard.

“Over 95% of students in Massachusetts have already been vaccinated against measles, making a widespread outbreak unlikely,” said Dr. Monica Bharel, Commissioner of Public Health. “Fortunately, the measles vaccine (called MMR) is safe and highly effective. As most measles cases in the U.S. have been among unvaccinated people and people who don't know their vaccination status, this provides an opportunity to remind people to confirm their immunization status with their healthcare provider, and for parents to have their children vaccinated.”

Measles is very contagious. People who believe they have been exposed are recommended to check their immunization status and to become aware of measles symptoms. People who are showing symptoms of measles are advised to telephone their healthcare providers before going directly to a healthcare facility. Please see the list of possible measles exposure sites for this case below.

Although this case was imported from abroad, DPH has been in consistent communication with clinicians and health care facilities over the past several months to be vigilant for possible measles cases, a need highlighted since the beginning of the US measles outbreak associated with a theme park in California.

Early symptoms of measles occur 10 days to two weeks after exposure and may resemble a cold or flu (with fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes), but a rash occurs on the skin two to four days after the initial symptoms develop. The rash usually appears first on the head and moves downward. The rash typically lasts a few days and then disappears in the same order it appeared.

People with measles may be contagious up to four days before the rash appears and for four days after the day the rash appears.

People who have had measles in the past or who have been vaccinated against measles per CDC recommendations are considered immune.

CDC Recommendations

- **Children.** Children should receive their first dose of Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine at 12-15 months. School-aged children need two doses of MMR vaccine.
- Babies as young as six months who are planning international travel should also get a dose of MMR prior to travel. This dose will need to be repeated once the child reaches 12-15 months.
- **Adults.** Adults should have at least one dose of MMR vaccine. Certain groups at high risk need two doses of MMR, such as international travelers, health care workers, and college students. Adults born in the U.S. before 1957 are considered to be immune to measles from past exposures, but in situations of exposure to measles may benefit from a dose of MMR vaccine to be safer.

State regulations require certain groups to be vaccinated against measles. Some health care workers and all children in kindergarten – 12th grade and college need to have two doses of MMR vaccine for school entry. Children in child care and preschool need one dose of MMR and childcare workers also need to have one or two doses of measles-containing vaccine, depending on their age and other factors. A blood test that proves immunity can also be used to fulfill this requirement for all groups. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/press-releases/dph/health-officials-announce-first-2015-case-of-measles.html>

For additional information, contact your local health department or DPH at 617-983-6800.

Further information is available by downloading the Measles fact sheet here:

- [Measles](#) 

Possible Public Measles Exposure Sites*

Wednesday 4/22

- 9:30 – 1:30 AM*: JFK Library in South Boston, Mass.
Boston Public Health Commission: 617-534-5611
- 2:00 – 5:00* PM: Subway Restaurant & The Garage shopping center in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Mass.
Cambridge Public Health Department: 617-665-3800

Thursday 4/23

- 2:30 – 6:00* PM: Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, Mass.
Gloucester Health Department: 978-281-9771

Friday 4/24

- 8:14 AM: MBTA Commuter Rail: Inbound from Hamilton Station to Boston (North Station)

- 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM*

Quincy Market

Visits to Footlocker and Abercrombie in the Faneuil Hall area.

TJ Maxx

- 3:20 PM: MBTA Commuter Rail: Outbound from North Station to Hamilton Station.

***Because the measles virus can remain suspended in the air for up to two hours, these exposure periods are based on the known duration of the visit, plus two hours.**