

Measles Cases Rise in Texas – What you Need to Know

Measles is a very highly contagious viral disease. Measles was considered eliminated in the United States in the year 2000. Due to decreasing immunization rates, measles is again active in the United States. [CBS News-Measles](#) You may have heard of **measles spreading in northwest Texas**. A large **majority of those cases are among those who were unvaccinated against measles**.

At the time I type this message, no known case of measles has occurred in the Houston area according to Dr. David Persse, Houston's Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Persse advises Houstonians to remain calm but to assess our own and our family's measles vaccination statuses. **People who know they are not or think they are not vaccinated against measles should get vaccinated.**

<https://www.khou.com/article/news/health/measles/health-department-measles-cases-in-houston-harris-county/285-1de3701c-a49c-4734-b667-2a5bfc69eba5>

What are symptoms of measles?

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), measles causes "fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, commonly followed by a rash that covers the whole body. It can lead to seizures (often associated with fever), ear infections, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Rarely, measles can cause brain damage or death." <https://www.immunize.org/wp-content/uploads/vis/mmr.pdf>. One death is associated with the northwest Texas measles outbreak. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/news-alerts/texas-announces-first-death-measles-outbreak>

How is measles spread?

Measles is very highly contagious. It is spread through the air when an infected person coughs, breathes, or sneezes. Measles is also spread through direct contact with an infected object or surface. According to CDC, **up to 90% of susceptible people who have close contact to a person with measles will be infected** with measles. The virus can float in the air hours after an infected person leaves an area.

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/clinical-overview>

Measles Vaccination:

VACCINE INFORMATION STATEMENT

MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella): What You Need to Know

Many vaccine information statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vi. Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite www.immunize.org/vi.

1. Why get vaccinated?

MMR vaccine can prevent measles, mumps, and rubella.

- **MEASLES (M)** causes fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, commonly followed by a rash that covers the whole body. It can lead to seizures (often associated with fever), ear infections, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Rarely, measles can cause brain damage or death.
- **MUMPS (M)** causes fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, and swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears. It can lead to deafness, swelling of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and, very rarely, death.
- **RUBELLA (R)** causes fever, sore throat, rash, headache, and eye irritation. It can cause arthritis in up to half of teenage and adult women. If a woman gets rubella while she is pregnant, she could have a miscarriage or the baby could be born with serious birth defects.

Most people who are vaccinated with MMR will be protected for life. Vaccines and high rates of vaccination have made these diseases much less common in the United States.

2. MMR vaccine

Children need 2 doses of MMR vaccine, usually:

- First dose at age 12 through 15 months
- Second dose at age 4 through 6 years

Infants who will be traveling outside the United States when they are between 6 and 11 months of age should get a dose of MMR vaccine before travel. These children should still get 2 additional doses at the recommended ages for long-lasting protection.

Older children, adolescents, and adults also need 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine if they are not already

immune to measles, mumps, and rubella. Your health care provider can help you determine how many doses you need.

A third dose of MMR might be recommended for certain people in mumps outbreak situations.

MMR vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines. Children 12 months through 12 years of age might receive MMR vaccine together with varicella vaccine in a single shot, known as MMRV. Your health care provider can give you more information.

3. Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of MMR or MMRV vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**
- Is **pregnant** or thinks she might be pregnant—pregnant women should not get MMR vaccine
- Has a **weakened immune system**, or has a **parent, brother, or sister with a history of hereditary or congenital immune system problems**
- Has ever had a **condition that makes him or her bruise or bleed easily**
- Has **recently had a blood transfusion or received other blood products**
- Has **tuberculosis**
- Has **gotten any other vaccines in the past 4 weeks**

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone MMR vaccination until a future visit.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting MMR vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.

4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Sore arm from the injection or redness where the shot is given, fever, and a mild rash can happen after MMR vaccination.
- Swelling of the glands in the cheeks or neck or temporary pain and stiffness in the joints (mostly in teenage or adult women) sometimes occur after MMR vaccination.
- More serious reactions happen rarely. These can include seizures (often associated with fever) or temporary low platelet count that can cause unusual bleeding or bruising.
- In people with serious immune system problems, this vaccine may cause an infection that may be life-threatening. People with serious immune system problems should not get MMR vaccine.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

5. What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call 9-1-1 and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your

health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov or call 1-800-822-7967. VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.

6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Claims regarding alleged injury or death due to vaccination have a time limit for filing, which may be as short as two years. Visit the VICP website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation or call 1-800-338-2382 to learn about the program and about filing a claim.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Visit the website of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for vaccine package inserts and additional information at www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO) or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.



U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Vaccine Information Statement
MMR Vaccine

42 U.S.C. § 300aa-20
1/31/2025

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What should I do?

Ensure you and your family are vaccinated against measles by getting the MMR immunization.

Where can get vaccinated? Among many other places, here are a few to consider:

- Your primary care provider
- [Texas Children's Mobile Clinic Program](#)
- [Troubleshooters for Health Immunization Program](#)
- Your Memorial Hermann School Based Health Center if your student uses Medicaid or has no health insurance
- Check with a local drug store like CVS or Walgreens

What if my student is not vaccinated against measles?

Vaccination against measles is required by the state of Texas for all Texas students. A student who is not vaccinated against measles may not be allowed to go to school. [State of Texas Minimum Vaccination Requirements for Students Grade K - 12](#)

What if my student has a vaccine exemption?

If a crisis is declared that includes our school, children with a vaccine exemption affidavit may not be allowed to go to school. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school/exemptions>

When was the last known case of measles in the Houston area?

On January 23, 2025, there were two confirmed cases of measles in Harris County. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/news-alerts/confirmed-case-measles-january-2025>

Main Takeaway:

No known case of measles has occurred in the Houston area. Families should remain calm and assess the families' measles vaccination statuses. People who are not or might not vaccinated against measles should get vaccinated.