

Measles Advisory

In the past week, Massachusetts identified 5 new cases of measles, ranging in age from 16 months to 65 years. All confirmed and suspect cases have either unknown or undocumented history of measles vaccination. Maine school nurses are asked to increase surveillance for rash and illness suggestive of measles to help with early identification of potential cases and to assist in preventing the spread of disease in Maine.

Measles is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus and is spread from person to person through the air by infectious droplets. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, loss of appetite, pink eye, and a rash. The rash usually lasts 5 – 6 days, beginning at the hairline, moving to the face and upper neck, and proceeding down the body.

Due to spring allergies, many students are experiencing runny nose and cough. If your child has not been fully immunized, and exhibits the above symptoms and unusual rash please contact your primary care provider as soon as possible.

Vaccination Recommendations

Children: All children \geq 12 months of age should receive their first dose of MMR at the 12-15 month routine health care visit, and every effort should be made to identify and vaccinate children who are not up-to date. All school-aged children should have two doses of MMR vaccine by the time they attend kindergarten.

Adults: All adults should have acceptable proof of immunity to measles. Certain groups at high risk should have received two doses of MMR, such as international travelers, health care workers, and college students. Women are advised not to receive any live virus vaccine during pregnancy including MMR.

For more information visit the Centers for Disease Control Measles page. Call your school nurse or primary care provider if you have any further questions.

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>