



DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO. 2

Alcona County

311 Lake St. P.O. Box 218

Harrisville, MI 48740

Tel: 989-724-6757

Iosco County

420 W. Lake Street

Tawas City, MI 48764

Tel: 989-362-6183

Ogemaw County

630 Progress St.

West Branch, MI 48661

Tel: 989-345-5020

Oscoda County

393 S. Mt. Tom Road

Mio, MI 48647

Tel: 989-826-3970

INFORMATION RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: 3.27.2024

Contact: Scott Izzo

Phone: 989-343-1808

District Health Department No. 2 Recommends Precautions Against the Spread of Measles

District Health Department No. 2 (DHD2) would like to share with residents to be mindful of exposure to measles. Measles is a highly infectious and vaccine preventable disease that is caused by the measles virus and can become dangerous or deadly when infecting children, the elderly, or those with compromised immune systems.

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases in the world, so much so that if one person has it, up to 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. Measles virus can also live up to two hours in the air, meaning that others can still become infected after an ill person leaves the area. Anyone potentially exposed should monitor themselves for symptoms consistent with measles for 21 days after the exposure date.

"Recent outbreaks across the United States have brought renewed focus to the importance of preventing the spread of measles," said Dr. Mark Hamed, MD MBA MPH, Medical Director for District Health Department No. 2. "Individuals without prior immunity have a high likelihood of becoming seriously ill if exposed to the virus. Nearly one out of five unvaccinated people who contract measles will require hospitalization, but in some outbreaks that rate is much higher. Before measles vaccinations were widely available, about 500 individuals died each year from measles in the United States. These deaths were overwhelmingly in children and the immunocompromised. This is why it is crucial to know your own vaccination or immunity status and to take steps to become more protected."

Michigan residents may check their vaccination status by reaching out to their primary medical provider, contacting their local health department, or checking the online Michigan Immunization Portal at <https://mcir.org/public/>.

Measles Symptoms

Measles is spread person-to-person via direct contact or large respiratory droplets, and through the air. Measles is considered transmissible from 4 days before through 4 days



Proud Member of the [Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance](#): 7 local health departments advocating for Public Health

after the onset of rash. Symptoms of measles usually begin 7-14 days after exposure, but can appear up to 21 days after exposure and may include:

- High fever (may spike to over 104°F).
- Cough.
- Runny nose.
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis).
- Tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums and roof of the mouth (Koplik Spots) two to three days after symptoms begin.
- A rash that is red, raised, and blotchy; usually starts on face, spreads to trunk, arms and legs three to five days after symptoms begin.

If symptoms develop, call your doctor, urgent care, or hospital before seeking treatment. This will allow any healthcare professionals to take appropriate precautions that will prevent further spread of the disease.

Measles Vaccine

The measles vaccine is highly effective and very safe. A single dose of measles vaccine is about 93% effective at preventing measles, while two doses are about 97% effective. It is also effective if used within 72 hours of measles exposure to prevent illness. However, some individuals with weakened immune systems may not be eligible to receive this vaccine. Getting vaccinated not only protects the individual receiving the vaccine but can also protect vulnerable individuals in our communities from being exposed to this illness.

For children, the first dose of the measles vaccine (MMR) is routinely given at about 12 months of age, and the second starting at 4 years of age. Individuals with two appropriately spaced doses of MMR are considered immune. Additionally, adults born before 1957 or who have evidence of prior measles illness are considered immune.

Across the United States and in Michigan, routine immunization coverage has dropped. Statewide, vaccine coverage for the MMR (two doses) vaccine for children ages 4 to 6 years old has decreased from 89% in 2017 to 84% in 2022. In the DHD2 jurisdiction (covering Alcona, Iosco, Ogemaw, and Oscoda counties), only 71% of children aged 19 to 36 months and only 62% of children aged 4 to 6 years are up to date on their MMR vaccines in 2024. These rates are especially troubling within Oscoda County (59% and 44% for each age range respectively).

Anyone not fully vaccinated against measles is encouraged to do so as soon as possible. Outbreaks of measles are on the rise in 2024, with currently over 60 cases reported in the United States since the beginning of the year across 16 states include Michigan. Those who have traveled recently, especially to states or jurisdictions with ongoing measles outbreaks, are encouraged to monitor for possible symptoms for 21 days after returning from travel. For more information on ongoing measles outbreaks, you can visit the CDC website: [Measles Cases and Outbreaks | CDC](#)

Vaccinations against measles are available from health care providers, pharmacies, and local health departments such as DHD2. Cost effective and free options are available



through DHD2, please reach out to us at 1-800-504-2650 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Resources

- District Health Department No. 2: [Communicable Disease Reporting - DHD2](#)
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: [Measles \(michigan.gov\)](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Measles](#)

###

