

I'VE HEARD ABOUT A MEASLES OUTBREAK ON THE NEWS. IS THIS SOMETHING I SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT?

Since January 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported a total of 704 measles cases within the United States. The majority of people who developed measles in these cases were unvaccinated, and outbreaks have been associated with travelers who brought measles back from international travel. As of May 1, no cases have been reported in Utah. (cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html)

WHAT IS MEASLES?

Measles is an illness caused by a highly contagious virus. The symptoms of measles generally appear about 7 to 14 days after a person is infected. Measles typically begins with:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose (coryza)
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)

Complications of measles can include severe secondary bacterial infections, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and death.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

Measles can be prevented with the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. The MMR vaccine is very safe and effective. Two doses of MMR vaccine are ~97 percent effective at preventing measles, and one dose is ~93 percent effective.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M PROTECTED AGAINST THE MEASLES?

Acceptable evidence of immunity against measles includes at least one of the following:

- Written documentation of adequate vaccination:
 - » One or more doses of a measles-containing vaccine administered on or after the first birthday for preschool-age children and adults not at high risk
 - » Two doses of measles-containing vaccine for school-age children and adults at high risk, including college students, healthcare personnel, and international travelers

- Laboratory evidence of immunity (a positive measles antibody titer)
- Laboratory confirmation of measles (you have had the measles illness in the past)
- Birth before 1957

New employees at ARUP without written documentation of two doses of the MMR vaccine have laboratory testing (antibody titers) done during orientation to check for immunity to measles.

If you would like to verify documentation of adequate vaccination or evidence of immunity, see your MyChart account (mychart.med.utah.edu) or contact the ARUP Family Health Clinic at (801) 584-5144.

If you will be traveling internationally, please contact the clinic to schedule a pre-travel consultation—ideally 6 weeks prior to departure—and review all travel health recommendations.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY KIDS?

The CDC recommends routine childhood immunization with the MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 to 15 months of age and the second dose at 4 to 6 years of age or at least 28 days following the first dose.

If your children will be traveling internationally, please contact the clinic to schedule a pre-travel consultation—ideally 6 weeks prior to departure—and review all travel health recommendations. For children 6 to 11 months of age that will be traveling internationally, one dose of MMR vaccine may be administered. Infants that get one dose prior to their first birthday will still need to receive another two doses according to the routine schedule.

HOW IS MEASLES SPREAD?

The measles virus lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing. Also, the measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90 percent of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. Infected people can spread measles to others from four days before to four days after the rash appears.

WHAT IF I'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO MEASLES AND I HAVEN'T BEEN VACCINATED?

Call your healthcare provider right away. If a person without evidence of immunity is exposed to confirmed measles, the MMR vaccine should be given within 72 hours or immunoglobulin should be administered within six days.

TO READ MORE, VISIT THE CDC'S FAQ ABOUT MEASLES:

cdc.gov/measles/about/faqs.html#fully-vaccinated

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AT THE ARUP FAMILY HEALTH CLINIC, CALL (801) 584-5144.