



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR


MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 7, 2024

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, Chief Medical Executive   
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Dr. Diane L. Golzynski, Deputy Superintendent   
Finance and Operations, Michigan Department of Education

**SUBJECT:** Measles: Guidance on Signs, Symptoms, and Prevention

Michigan recently experienced its first confirmed case of measles since 2019, and since that time two additional cases have been reported. In addition to Michigan, 41 measles cases have been reported in 2024 in 16 other states to date. It's important for everyone to understand that measles is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable disease that is spread by direct person-to-person contact and through the air.

Intermediate school districts (ISDs) and local education agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), should help their communities understand the signs and symptoms for preventing the spread of this disease. For guidance, please refer to the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services guidance - [Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#).

It's important to know that the measles virus can live for up to two hours in the air where the infected person is present. 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 that usually starts on the face and spreads to the trunk, arms and legs three to five days after symptoms begin.

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If symptoms develop, families are urged to call ahead before visiting their doctor or emergency room so facilities can take precautions to prevent exposure to others.

With the risk of community spread, families are encouraged to ensure their children are up to date on all their childhood immunizations, including the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. **Ninety percent of unvaccinated individuals who are exposed to measles will become infected.** About **20% of people who get measles will be hospitalized.**

Across the United States, routine immunization coverage has dropped. Statewide, vaccine coverage for the MMR (2 doses) vaccine for children ages 4 to 6 years old has decreased from 89.4% in 2017 to 84% in 2022. For children ages 19 through 35 months of age, vaccine coverage has decreased from 84.7% in April 2020 to 83.6% in December 2023.

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

Families and caregivers can contact their healthcare provider or visit their local health department for additional information on ways to obtain the vaccine and schedule an appointment. Your children may be able to get no-cost vaccines through CDC's Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program at healthcare providers offices, pharmacies and health clinics that are enrolled in the VFC Program.

To learn more about the MMR vaccine, visit [Vaccine for Measles \(MMR Shot\) | CDC](#).

For more information about Measles cases in the U.S., visit [Measles Cases and Outbreaks | CDC](#).

cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments