



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Amarillo

Health Advisory
January 30, 2025

Measles in the Texas Panhandle

Lubbock Public Health says an area school-aged child who was recently treated at a Lubbock healthcare facility has tested positive for measles.

Vaccination is the best protection against measles. Children receive the first dose of measles vaccine (MMR) at age 12 months and a second dose after age 4.

People with confirmed or suspected measles should stay home from school, work, and other group settings until **after** the fourth day of rash onset.

Healthcare providers should consider measles in patients presenting with the following:

Symptoms appear 7 to 21 days after contact with the virus, and may include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- 2-3 days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth.
- 3-5 days after symptoms begin, a rash that appears flat and red may appear on the face and hairline. This rash tends to spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet.

Diagnostic Testing

Testing for measles should be done for all suspected measles cases at the time of the initial medical visit:

- DSHS strongly encourages providers to submit specimens for PCR testing to the DSHS Laboratory because genotyping will be performed on positive PCR specimens, which can be helpful during outbreaks.
- The DSHS Laboratory can perform PCR testing on throat swabs (preferred) or nasopharyngeal swabs placed in viral transport media and serology on serum specimens.
- Measles PCR and serology (IgM and IgG) testing is available at both the DSHS Laboratory and at commercial laboratories.
- Providers should work with Amarillo Public Health or their respective DSHS Regional office to coordinate testing at the DSHS Laboratory to ensure specimens are submitted correctly and meet testing requirements.
- Unless coordinated in advance, specimens may only be received by the DSHS Laboratory during normal business hours Monday through Friday.

Control and Prevention Measures

- MMR Vaccine
 - The MMR vaccine, if administered within 72 hours of initial measles exposure, may provide some protection, or modify the clinical course of disease among susceptible persons who otherwise have no contraindications to MMR vaccination (e.g., severe immunocompromise, age <6 months, pregnancy). ([cdc.gov/surv-manual/php/table-of-contents/chapter-7-measles.html](https://www.cdc.gov/surv-manual/php/table-of-contents/chapter-7-measles.html)).
 - Susceptible persons who receive a dose of MMR vaccine as PEP within 72 hours of initial measles exposure may return to childcare, school, or work.
 - Any susceptible contact under 12 months of age who receives MMR vaccination should be revaccinated according to the routine pediatric schedule (i.e., two additional doses

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with the first between 12–15 months of age). All doses of MMR vaccine must be separated by at least 28 days.

- Immunoglobulin (IG)
 - IG, if administered within six days of initial measles exposure, may provide some protection against measles or modify the clinical course of disease among susceptible persons ([cdc.gov/surv-manual/php/table-of-contents/chapter-7-measles.html](https://www.cdc.gov/surv-manual/php/table-of-contents/chapter-7-measles.html)).
 - IG is the only option for PEP for populations which cannot receive MMR (infants less than six months of age, severely immunocompromised people, and pregnant people).
 - Priority should be given to persons exposed in settings with intense, prolonged, and close contact (e.g., household, daycare, classroom) and for those at high risk of severe disease. IG PEP should be provided to severely immunocompromised contacts regardless of prior measles vaccination status due to the risk for severe disease.
 - IG PEP can be given to susceptible infants aged 6–12 months, although MMR vaccine is preferred per American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidance if received within 72 hours of exposure.

Transmission:

Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing. Breathing in droplets or touching surfaces that are contaminated can also be infectious. The virus can live for up to two hours in airspace. Measles can be spread 4 days before through 4 days after the rash appears.

What to do if exposed or symptomatic:

If you believe you have been exposed to measles or are experiencing symptoms:

- Isolate yourself immediately to prevent spreading the virus to others.
- Contact your healthcare provider by phone to arrange testing in a way that minimizes exposure to others (do not show up unannounced).
- Watch for symptoms, which typically develop 7 to 21 days after exposure.

For additional information: [Confirmed Case of Measles - January 2025 | Texas DSHS](#)

To report suspected or confirmed measles in Potter and Randall counties contact Shannon Gregory with Amarillo Public Health 24/7 at 806-378-6321 or Shannon.gregory@amarillo.gov

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