



NASSAU COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**HEALTH  
ALERT**

March 23, 2024

Re: Verified Measles Case in Nassau County

To: Nassau County School Superintendents/Health Services/Nurses/Day Care Providers

The Nassau County Department of Health (NCDOH) is issuing a health alert for the first laboratory verified measles case in Nassau County since 2019. There has been an increasing number of measles cases in the United States. This year, three cases have been diagnosed in New York State, with two cases in New York City and now one in Nassau County. The Nassau County case of measles was diagnosed in an unvaccinated child who is less than 5 years of age and not enrolled in school or school-based pre-K. The increase in cases is largely attributed to waning vaccination rates nationwide, as well as globally increasing rates of infection.

**Key Points:**

- Schools should be on alert for students/staff who have febrile rash illness and symptoms consistent with measles (e.g., cough, coryza, or conjunctivitis).
- Measles is one of the most contagious infections and individuals are contagious from four days before to four days after rash onset.
- Report students/staff with suspected measles immediately to the local health department of the person's residence. In Nassau County report to NCDOH by calling (516) 227-9639 weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For weekend or after-hours consultation or reporting call (516) 742-6154.
- Do not wait for laboratory confirmation to report.
- Educate parents/staff about measles-containing vaccines.
- School administrations, Medical Directors and School Nurses are urged to review all vaccination records to assure compliance with New York State Public Health Law.

**Symptoms:**

Symptoms usually appear 10 to 12 days after exposure to the virus. In some cases, symptoms may start as early as seven days or as late as 21 days.



Early symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes

Three to five days after initial symptoms, a rash of red spots appears on the face that then spreads over the entire body.



Source CDC/PHIL

Anyone can become infected with measles, but the virus is more severe in infants, people who are pregnant and people whose immune systems are weak. Complications of measles include:

- Diarrhea
- Ear infections
- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Premature birth or low-birth-weight in pregnancy
- Death

Symptoms may be mild, absent, or atypical in persons who have some degree of immunity to measles virus before infection (e.g., in previously vaccinated or previously infected persons).

### ***How Measles Spreads:***

Measles is very contagious. It is spread through the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs. A person will be contagious 4 days before the rash appears and for 4 days after the rash appears. They are no longer contagious on the fifth day after the rash started.

The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours.

### ***Reporting:***

- Suspected measles cases must be reported **immediately** to the local health department of the person's residence. In Nassau County report to NCDOH by calling (516) 227-9639 weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For weekend or after-hours consultation or reporting call (516) 742-6154.

### ***Public Health Action:***

- Students/Staff/Attendees who have been diagnosed with measles must be excluded from school and isolate until 4 days after rash onset.
- Contacts to measles cases lacking documentation of immunity must be excluded until 21 days after onset of rash in last measles case.
- People who are suspected to be exposed to measles who cannot readily show that they have evidence of immunity against measles should be referred for evaluation for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).