

School Guidance for Measles

April 1, 2024

As of March 21, 2024, there have been 64 reported cases of measles across 17 states, including four in Southeast Michigan. The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) identifies protecting our community from vaccine-preventable diseases like measles as a public health priority. To properly protect our community, following the Michigan Vaccine Preventable Disease Investigation Guidelines and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services [Managing Communicable Disease in Schools](#) is necessary to ensure timely reporting, investigation, and intervention.

Measles is an extremely contagious vaccine-preventable virus that spreads via coughing and sneezing and can survive in the air for up to two hours. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 90% of people within close quarters of an infected individual will become infected themselves if they are not immune. Symptoms of measles usually develop seven to 14 days after exposure but can appear up to 21 days later. People infected with measles are contagious from four days before the rash appears until four days after. Symptoms can include:

- High fever (may spike to over 104°F).
- Cough, runny nose, and 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 the face, and spreads to the trunk, arms, and legs three to five days after symptoms begin.

Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) is the vaccine recommended for people to get. People get a total of two doses of MMR with the first one between 12 to 15 months of age and the second dose between four through six years of age. The vaccine is 97% effective after both doses. Under special circumstances and discussion with your provider, children and adults may receive the second dose at least 28 days after the first dose. To achieve community protection from measles, the GTCHD needs to observe 95% of the population immune to the disease. In Grand Traverse County, ~82% of children aged five to six received both doses in 2023. People are considered immune if they:

- Have documentation of age-appropriate measles vaccination.
 - Preschool-aged children > 12 months of age: one dose.
 - School-aged children, adolescents, and adults: two doses.
- Laboratory confirmation of a measles disease diagnosis.
- Serologic (lab) evidence of immunity to measles.
- Born before 1957 (considered immune by age).

Due to the severe transmissibility of measles, even one case in a daycare or school will require the exclusion of all exposed students, staff, and volunteers for 21 days if they are not protected through vaccination or previous history.

Excluded individuals may return to daycare or school immediately if they receive their **second** required dose of MMR vaccine within 72 hours of exposure, or by documentation of immunity. An individual receiving their first measles-containing vaccine after they have been exposed may still be excluded for the entire 21-day period.

It's important to note that if you develop measles symptoms, please call your healthcare provider or emergency room before visiting to prevent others from becoming exposed as this allows time to take precautions. GTCHD understands that it can be challenging for children to miss several weeks of school due to illness and is encouraging families to make sure everyone in their household is up to date on vaccinations.

For information on measles or to schedule a vaccination appointment, please contact your healthcare provider or call the GTCHD at 231-995-6131.