

February 2019

Dear Child Care Providers:

Washington State is currently experiencing an outbreak of measles. Measles activity has been confirmed only in Clark and King Counties. There are no measles cases at this time in Snohomish County.

This letter provides information about measles and identifies steps you can take to protect the children in your care.

What is measles?

Measles is caused by a virus. It causes symptoms of high fever, cough, runny nose, and red watery eyes. Other symptoms include small white spots in the mouth called Koplik spots and a raised red rash that starts at the hairline and then spreads over the body. Measles can also lead to more serious complications, including hearing loss, pneumonia, brain damage and even death.

Symptoms usually start 7–18 days after exposure. People with measles are contagious from 1 to 2 days before symptoms start (or 5 days before the rash begins) until 4 days after the rash appears.

How is measles spread?

Measles is a highly contagious disease. A person with measles can spread the virus simply by breathing. When an infected person breathes, small infectious droplets can attach to dust particles and float on air. Measles can live in the air of a room up to 2 hours after an infected individual has left. It can also travel on air currents and infect people in another room. Additionally, when an infected person coughs or sneezes, measles droplets can land on surfaces and continue to be contagious.

Who is at risk of getting measles?

- Infants who are too young to receive the measles vaccine (less than 12 months old)
- Children over 1 year of age who have not received at least 1 dose of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine
- Adults born in or after 1957 who have not been vaccinated or have not previously had measles disease. People born before 1957 were likely exposed to measles as children and are usually considered immune.
- Individuals with compromised immune systems who cannot get the vaccine are very high risk.

What should child care programs do now?

- Make sure the children in your program are up to date for their age on the MMR vaccine. (The vaccine requirement for child care attendance is one dose of MMR at 12 through 15 months of age and a second dose at 4 through 6 years of age).
- Make sure their Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS) is signed and up-to-date.
- Ask staff to check whether they've received MMR vaccine and to get vaccinated if they have not.
- Discourage non-immune or non-vaccinated staff or volunteers from working with infants or other susceptible or immunocompromised children. Consider posting a "Do Not Enter If" poster on door to infant rooms.

- Make sure that you have a current list of children who have exemptions to vaccines. The Washington State Department of Health provides a sample [Child Care List of Exempt Children](#).
- Watch for symptoms of measles (fever, cough, runny nose, irritated eyes, rash).
- Do not exclude non-immune or non-vaccinated children from child care unless instructed to do so by the Snohomish Health District.
- Because measles is a notifiable condition, please call the Snohomish Health District's disease reporting line at 425-339-5278 to report if a child or staff in your child care is diagnosed with measles.

If a child develops any of the symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, irritated eyes, rash):

- Encourage their family to call their primary care provider and tell them about the child's symptoms right away.
- If you suspect measles, **call ahead** prior to visiting a health care professional or medical facility so they can take appropriate precautions prior to your arrival.
- He/she should stay home and away from other people and from public places, and be excluded from child care, until at least four days after the rash appears (provided that no other exclusion criteria are met). They are contagious throughout this period.

Resources:

- Washington State Department of Health:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Measles>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>
- Measles Poster:
<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/parent-infographic.html>

To get the MMR vaccine, contact your healthcare provider. If you don't have a healthcare provider, call your local health department or the Family Health Hotline at **1-800-322-2588**.

Please call the Snohomish Health District Child Care Health Outreach Program at 425-252-5415 if you have any questions. If you need to report a case of measles, call the Communicable Disease Reporting Line at 425-339-5278.