

Dear Early Intervention Provider:

Below you will find recent information released by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) regarding the ongoing measles outbreak in New York City. Attached you will find a Frequently Asked Questions document about Measles. The Division of Family and Child Health, Bureau of Early Intervention encourage all providers to review the information available on the DOHMH measles information page that can be accessed

at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/measles.page>

As professionals working in communities with children and their families, please disseminate this information to your staff and families as appropriate.

Specifically:

- Families can prevent measles by making sure all family members have received MMR vaccine. If parents, children or other families members need to be vaccinated, call your healthcare provider immediately. If families need help finding an MMR vaccine, call 311 to access a list of facilities that can provide MMR at low or no cost.
- There are large outbreaks of measles in Europe and Israel, as well as in countries in South America, Africa, and Asia. Families should make sure that parents, children and other family members have been vaccinated with MMR vaccine before traveling to Europe or Israel. Infants ages 6 to 11 months should also be vaccinated prior to international travel.
- If anyone believes that they were exposed to measles or have symptoms of measles, they should contact their health care provider before seeking care to prevent exposure to other patients.

As always, thank you for your continued work on behalf of New York City's youngest children.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Oxiris Barbot, MD

Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT IDENTIFIES FIVE MORE YESHIVAS ALLOWING UNVACCINATED STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL

Health Department issues Commissioner's Orders directing school staff at the five yeshivas to follow mandatory exclusions from school or face violations subject to fines

The measles outbreak in the Orthodox Jewish community is now at 158 cases since it began last October. 137 cases are children 18 and under, and 21 are adults; 11 people have been hospitalized

Measles is a highly contagious disease and can cause pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and death. Measles is preventable with the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine

March 14, 2019 – The Health Department today announced five additional yeshivas have been allowing unvaccinated children to attend school, defying the Health Department's directive during the measles outbreak. The Health Department issued Commissioner's Orders this week requiring school staff at the following yeshivas to comply with the mandated exclusions or face violations subject to fines: Bnos Square of Williamsburg (382 Willoughby Ave), Bnos Chayil (712 Wythe Ave), Bnos Chayil (345 Hewes St), Tiferes Bnos (585 Marcy Ave), and Simche Kinder (808 Myrtle Ave). The schools were identified during audits to ensure compliance with the exclusion directive. Three of the five schools had students attend while contagious. Measles is a highly contagious disease and can cause

pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and death. Measles is preventable with the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

“As the city’s doctor, and a pediatrician, I am very concerned that children without the measles vaccination, are at unnecessary risk for serious, and potentially fatal, symptoms related to measles,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “The outbreak is not over, and we will continue to see additional cases as long as unvaccinated students are not properly excluded from attending school.”

“I thank the Health Department for their efforts to educate families and take other steps to help prevent this highly contagious and very serious disease, in our community and throughout the city,” said **Senator Brian Kavanagh**. “I join them and the many local organizations and community leaders partnering with them to control the recent outbreaks, in calling for every family to understand the importance of vaccination.”

“Parents who oppose vaccinations for measles and all other illnesses not only put their own children at risk, but endanger other children and families as well,” said **Councilman Mark Levine** (Chair of the Council Committee on Health). “As Israel and other nations are facing outbreaks, the risk of measles affecting our New York communities is particularly acute in neighborhoods where international travel is common and frequent. I strongly urge all parents across the city to ensure their children are up to date on all American Medical Association (AMA) recommended vaccinations.”

“The increasing outbreak of measles to 158 cases is a stark reminder of the importance of vaccination. Measles are highly contagious and life-threatening — if a parent has not had their child vaccinated, it is extremely important they keep their child home until they’ve been treated,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin** (Chair of the Committee on General Welfare). “We need to stop further spread and unnecessary harm to our communities.”

“Vaccinating children is one of the most basic ways a parent can protect their child’s health,” said **Councilman Chaim Deutsch** (Brighton Beach, Marine Park, Midwood). “These new cases of measles out breaking within the Orthodox community are worrisome, particularly for parents of children too young to be fully vaccinated against the measles. I urge parents who are traveling with young children to follow Health Department recommendations and vaccinate their kids. I thank the Health Department for their efforts to do outreach and spread the word to ensure New York families are protected.”

Last December, the Department announced mandatory exclusions for students in selected ZIP codes in Borough Park and Williamsburg that have not received the required number of doses of MMR vaccine. In January, Yeshiva Kehilath Yakov Pupa in Williamsburg went out of compliance with the Health Department’s exclusion order, allowing an unvaccinated student who had measles but had not yet begun presenting symptoms to attend school. This yeshiva is connected to 28 cases in students and an additional 14 cases directly linked to the school, contributing to a large increase in measles cases and the continuation of the outbreak.

The measles outbreak in the Orthodox Jewish community is now at 158 cases since it began in October. The vast majority of cases are children under 18 years of age (137 cases), and 21 cases are adults. There are no deaths associated with this outbreak, although there have been complications, including 11 hospitalizations and one child who was in the intensive care unit. In the past week, the Department identified 25 cases: nine who were diagnosed in the past week and 16 who were identified retrospectively (that is, they recently had the illness and were identified after symptoms subsided). Most of these recent cases are from Williamsburg but two were from Borough Park, Brooklyn. Since the beginning of the outbreak, five people, including the initial case of measles, acquired measles on a visit to Israel, where a large outbreak of the disease is occurring. One case was

acquired from the U.K. and one from Ukraine. None of the 25 most recently added cases are travel related.

Since the outbreak began, the Department has worked with elected officials, community organizations, and religious leaders to conduct extensive outreach in the community to educate residents in these ZIP codes about the risks associated with measles and the importance of vaccination. This effort has resulted in over 7,000 people receiving the MMR vaccine.

In February, the Department expanded vaccination recommendations for providers serving the Orthodox Jewish community to include an early, extra dose of the MMR vaccine for children between the ages of 6 months to 11 months who live in Williamsburg and Borough Park.

Measles Background

- Measles is transmitted by airborne particles, droplets, and direct contact with the respiratory secretions of an infected person.
- Symptoms usually appear 10 to 12 days after exposure to measles, and in some cases, symptoms can start as early as seven days or as late as 21 days following exposure.
- Early symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes.
- Rash and fever are the typical symptoms of measles and usually occur four days following the early symptoms. The rash usually starts on the face and proceeds down the body. The rash lasts several days.
- Infected individuals are contagious from four days before rash onset through the fourth day after rash appearance.
- Anyone can contract the measles but the virus is more severe in infants, pregnant women, and people whose immune systems are weak. Complications include:
 - Diarrhea
 - Ear infections
 - Pneumonia (swelling of the lungs)
 - Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
 - Premature birth or low birth-weight
 - Miscarriage
 - Death
- About 1 out of 1,367 children < 5 years developed a late, fatal complication of measles, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), an average of 9.5 years after recovery from measles infection.

Precautions New Yorkers Should Take

- You can prevent measles by making sure you and your family have received MMR vaccine. If you or your child need to be vaccinated, call your healthcare provider immediately. If you need help finding an MMR vaccine, call 311 to access a list of facilities that can provide MMR at low or no cost.
- There are large outbreaks of measles in Europe and Israel, as well as in countries in South America, Africa, and Asia. Make sure you have been vaccinated with MMR vaccine before traveling to Europe or Israel. Infants ages 6 to 11 months should also be vaccinated prior to international travel.
- If you think you were exposed to measles or if you have symptoms of measles, contact your health care provider before seeking care to prevent exposure to other patients.

For more information, New Yorkers can visit www.nyc.gov/health and search for “measles.” New Yorkers should call 311 to access a list of facilities that can provide MMR at low or no cost.