



Missoula City-County Health Department

HEALTH PROMOTION

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Health Department Urges Community Members Take Protective Measures Against Measles

MISSOULA – The Missoula City-County Health Department, in conjunction with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, is strongly encouraging all community members to check their measles immunization status to prepare for the possibility of measles reaching Montana. Currently there are no cases of measles in the state, but outbreaks in the Northwest have health officials on high alert.

The MMR vaccine is used to protect against measles. People can request their MMR immunization record from their primary care physician or other vaccine provider, or from their local health department. Immunization record requests for adults and children can also be made directly to the Montanan Immunization Program, and more information is online at

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/immunization/CopyofImmunizationRecord>.

As of Feb. 21, 159 cases of measles have been reported in 10 states. Sixty-five confirmed cases have been reported from a large outbreak in Clark County, Washington, with related cases in Portland, Oregon.

Measles is a serious respiratory disease caused by a virus.

Symptoms: Measles starts with a fever, followed by a cough, runny nose and red eyes. Then a rash of tiny, red spots breaks out, starting at the head and spreading to the rest of the body. The rash can last for a week, and coughing can last for 10 days.

Measles is highly contagious and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

- It is so contagious that if one person has it, nine out of 10 people around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected.
- A person can get measles just by being in a room where someone with measles has been, even up to two hours after that person has left.
- An infected person can spread measles to others even before he or she develops symptoms — from four days before they develop the measles rash through four days afterward.

Anyone who thinks they may have measles should *call* their health care provider before showing up in person.

Do NOT go to any health care facility, including the emergency room, without calling ahead. The health care agency will need to put precautions in place before arrival so others are not exposed to measles. Call 406-258-INFO for more information.

Protect yourself and your family by getting immunized.

Experts recommend that people get the MMR vaccine to protect against measles. The MMR vaccine is very safe and effective. Infants should receive their first dose between 12 and 15 months old, and a second dose between 4 and 6 years old. Adults born before 1957 are considered immune. Adults born after 1957 are considered protected with one dose, unless they work in healthcare, travel internationally or attend a post-secondary institution, in which case they need two doses.

The Missoula City-County Health Department, located at 301 West Alder St., carries the MMR vaccine and can bill most insurance plans, including Medicaid. They offer a sliding fee scale for those who are uninsured or underinsured. Call the vaccination clinic at 406-258-3363 for more information on MMR shots.

The clinic offers walk-in hours at the following times:

- 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
- 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday

For more information, visit missoula.co/measles or call 406-258-INFO.

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