



## **Measles Q&A**

In 2000, Measles was considered eliminated in the United States. However, in recent years, the number of Measles cases has been growing. In 2024, there were 285 reported cases, and as of January 2025, 483 cases have been reported. This article addresses common questions about Measles. The Essex County Office of Public Health used information from peer-reviewed articles to develop this content for informational and educational purposes.

*For further information about Measles, please see the references cited at the end of the page.*

### **“What are the signs and symptoms of Measles?”**

- Symptoms begin 10–14 days after exposure:
- Early symptoms (last 4–7 days): runny nose, cough, red/watery eyes, small white spots inside the cheeks.
- Rash appears 7–18 days after exposure, starting on the face and neck, spreading to hands and feet, and lasting 5–6 days.

### **Complications of Measles:**

- Blindness
- Encephalitis (brain swelling, potential brain damage)
- Severe diarrhea and dehydration
- Ear infections
- Severe breathing problems

### **“How does Measles spread?”**

The virus is extremely contagious, with each case potentially leading anywhere from 14 to 18 additional cases in vulnerable populations. Measles spreads through person-to-person transmission via respiratory droplets, small particle aerosols, and close contact. You can also contract measles simply by being in a room where someone with the virus has been, even up to two hours after they have left.

### **“Who is at risk of contracting Measles?”**

Unvaccinated young children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to contracting measles, with young children being the most commonly affected. Anyone who does not have immunity to Measles via MMR vaccine is at risk.

### **“When should I get the MMR vaccine?”**

These are the CDC guidelines for the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine:

- Typically, the first dose of MMR is administered at 12-15 months of age and the second dose is at 4-6 years of age.
- If there is an older child, adolescent, or adult with no proof of immunity, they would need 1 or 2 doses of the MMR vaccine with the doses being separated by at least 28 days.
- For infants (6-11 months old), if they are traveling internationally, they should get 1 dose of the
- MMR vaccine and after their first birthday, they should receive 2 more doses.

### **“How can I find out if I’ve had the MMR vaccine?”**

Contact your primary care provider to see if they have a record of your vaccination. If you can’t obtain a record, you can request a MMR titers bloodwork test from your PCP to see if you have immunity to Measles.

### **Additional source for Essex County Residents**

Here at Essex County, we have a Vaccines For Children program for underinsured and/or uninsured children. For more information, please visit our website: [https://www.essexcountynjvaccination.org/index.php/vaccine/vaccine\\_availability?vaccine\\_type\\_id=172](https://www.essexcountynjvaccination.org/index.php/vaccine/vaccine_availability?vaccine_type_id=172) or call us at 973-877-8456.

In conclusion, the recent increase in cases of Measles highlights the importance of staying up to date with vaccinations. The MMR vaccine is the most effective and cost-friendly measure in preventing the spread of Measles, especially among vulnerable populations like young children and those without proof of immunity. As outbreaks continue to occur, it is crucial for individuals to verify their vaccination status and seek the MMR vaccine if necessary. By doing so, we can help protect ourselves, our communities, and future generations from the threat of Measles.

## References

CDC. (2025, January 17). *Measles Vaccination*. Measles (Rubeola). <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccines/index.html?>

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