

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology  
and Immunization Section**

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Dear School Nurses and Administrators,

Declines in measles vaccination rates have increased the risk of measles outbreaks. Local measles cases usually occur when people who are not vaccinated travel outside the U.S., get measles infection, and spread the virus to other people upon their return. When vaccination rates are low, measles can spread in our communities. Some students in your school may be out-of-compliance with [immunization requirements](#) or have exemptions on file. This puts them at risk of measles infection and increases the possibility of community spread. School nurses and administrators play an important role in preventing disease spread, both in schools and the community.

**How can you prevent an outbreak at your school and community?**

All children attending school should be protected against measles by being vaccinated unless they have a valid exemption on file. Personal/philosophical exemptions are not permitted for the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. To decrease the risk of measles spreading in your school and the larger King County community, Public Health suggests that school nurses and staff take the following steps:

- Recommend MMR vaccine for students and staff who are not up-to-date.
- **Be prepared before measles infections occur** – Review the measles immunity status of all students, staff, and volunteers. Develop a [list](#) of non-immune/susceptible students, staff, and volunteers. These individuals will need to be rapidly identified and excluded should measles be identified at your school.
- Be aware of measles signs and symptoms. Early identification of illness can reduce the possibility of further exposure to susceptible individuals. See the enclosed measles fact sheet and additional [online resources](#)\*.
- Report suspected cases of measles to Public Health at (206) 296-4774 immediately. Public Health will help get people assessed and tested for measles, if needed.

**Who is considered immune to measles?**

People are considered immune to measles if they have:

- Written documentation of vaccination that includes:
  - One or more doses of MMR vaccine for preschool-age children and most adults, administered on or after the first birthday
  - **Two doses of MMR vaccine for all school-age children (K-12<sup>th</sup> grade)** and adults at increased risk such as college students, healthcare personnel and international travelers, with the first dose administered on or after the first birthday -OR-
- A date of birth before 1957 -OR-
- Laboratory evidence of measles immunity -OR-
- Laboratory confirmation of measles infection

**Who should get the MMR vaccine?**

- All eligible children should get routine immunization with MMR, with the first dose given at age 12-15 months and a second dose at age 4-6 years.
- Adults born after 1956 should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine unless they have evidence of immunity.
- Students attending college and other post-high school institutions, international travelers, and healthcare personnel should get two doses of MMR vaccine.

**What if a measles case occurs and there are exposures at a local school?**

Be prepared to:

- Exclude students, staff, and volunteers without evidence of measles immunity for 21 days after the last exposure at school.
- Require students with one dose of MMR vaccine to get a second dose.
- Recommend that staff with one dose of MMR vaccine get a second dose.
- Refer exposed pregnant people and students or staff with weakened immune systems to their healthcare provider for post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with immune globulin (IG)

**Resources available**

- For families needing health insurance or a health care provider, refer to [Community Health Access Program \(CHAP\)](#) or call 1-800-756-5437.
- Visit the Washington State Department of Health ([WA DOH](#)) [School and Child Care Immunization](#) page for more information on immunization requirements. Share this [WA DOH School and Child Care Immunizations Information for Families](#) webpage.
- Learn more about [where to get vaccinated in King County](#).

Thank you,



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