

# ABAHO

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA HEALTH OFFICIALS

## **BAY AREA HEALTH OFFICIALS URGE MEASLES VACCINATION AND AWARENESS AS CASES RISE NATIONALLY**

*Risk of exposure to measles in the Bay Area is currently low. However, with rising cases in the United States, getting the safe and highly effective vaccine is strongly encouraged for those not fully vaccinated.*

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA** – With the recent rise of measles cases nationally, Santa Cruz County joins Bay Area health officials in urging everyone to get the measles vaccination if they are not sure if they got it or if they did not have measles as a child, and to be aware of the signs and symptoms of measles after travel or exposure.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can cause serious illness and death, and the safe and highly effective measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine offers the best protection against the virus. Protect yourself by making sure each member of your family who is 12 months to 3 years old is vaccinated with one dose of MMR vaccine, and each person who is age 4 or older has gotten two doses of MMR vaccine.

Over 300 measles cases have been reported in the United States as of March 14, 2025. This includes a large outbreak among primarily unvaccinated children in Texas and nearby states. At this time, there have been two deaths. These were the first measles deaths in the United States since 2015.

There are five reported measles cases in California as of March 11, 2025. All five cases were separately reported after international travel, and there is no evidence they are connected to the outbreak in Texas.

“Measles is highly contagious, yet highly preventable through vaccination,” said Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Lisa Hernandez. “The best way to protect yourself and your family against measles is by getting the MMR vaccine.”

### **How Measles Spreads and Symptoms**

Measles spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, talks, coughs, or sneezes. If an infected person coughs or sneezes, the virus can linger in indoor air for several hours. Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis (pink eye), followed 2-4 days later by a rash.

About one in five unvaccinated people in the United States who get measles are hospitalized, and nearly one to three of every 1,000 children who become infected with measles will die from respiratory and neurologic complications, according to [CDC](#). Measles presents the greatest risk

to children under five years of age, adults over 20 years of age, those who are pregnant, and people with compromised immune systems.

### **MMR Vaccine**

The safe and highly effective [MMR vaccine](#) is recommended for children aged 12-15 months, with a second dose administered between ages 4 and 6 years. Children can receive the second dose of MMR vaccine earlier than 4 through 6 years, as long as it is at least 28 days after the first dose. Infants 6-12 months of age can start vaccination early prior to international travel or travel to an outbreak area. Teenagers and adults with no evidence of immunity should be vaccinated right away. Your medical provider can order a simple blood test to check whether or not you are immune.

One dose of the MMR vaccine is 93 percent effective against measles, and two doses are 97 percent effective. Individuals born between 1957 and 1969 are likely to have received only one dose and should consider getting a second dose. The MMR vaccine protects you for life and is widely available at provider offices, clinics, health systems and pharmacies.

### **Measles and Travel**

Home to three major airports, the Bay Area is a hub for international travel and tourism, increasing the potential for exposure to this highly contagious virus. For individuals or families that plan to travel, anyone who is not vaccinated against measles is at increased risk of getting infected.

Plan early before international travel and check your destination and the CDC [Global Measles Travel Health Notice](#) for more travel health advice, including where measles outbreaks have been reported. Parents should consult with their child's health care provider prior to travel. The CDC offers [accelerated vaccination guidelines](#) for children and adults who plan to travel internationally.

For questions about the MMR vaccine and immunization records, check with your health care provider and access your [digital vaccine record](#).

**Health Officers from the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, Sonoma, and the City of Berkeley encourage the public to take the above easy steps to protect themselves and others.**