



## MEASLES: COMMUNITY FACT SHEET

There has been a recent increase in measles cases in the U.S. across several states (including Illinois), largely due to cases among under- or unvaccinated persons from the U.S. and abroad. **Due to the presence of measles in our region, we would like to provide you with some information** to increase awareness, disease recognition and reporting, the importance of prevention through vaccination, and most importantly, **to help control and prevent the spread of measles in the community.**

**The majority of the people who get measles are unvaccinated.** Measles is still common in many parts of the world, including some countries in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. Travelers with measles continue to bring the disease into the U.S. Measles can spread when it reaches a community in the U.S. where groups of people are unvaccinated.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. It spreads through the air through coughing and sneezing. **Measles starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat, and is followed by a rash that spreads all over the body.** About three out of 10 people who get measles will develop one or more complications including pneumonia, ear infections, diarrhea, and rarely encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Complications are more common in young children and adults.

Patients with measles are **contagious from four days before through four days after rash onset.** After an infected person leaves a location, the virus remains viable for up to 2 hours on surfaces and in the air. **Patients suspected of having measles should contact their physician for further evaluation and testing (prior to visiting to prevent potential spread of disease), and be reported to a local health department as soon as possible, within 24 hours.**

**Children and adults should be up to date with their immunizations.** If you or anyone in your family does not have documented immunity against measles, please contact your physician or local pharmacy for appropriate vaccination(s) and/or immunity testing.

All children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine. The measles vaccine is administered as MMR, a combination vaccine that provides protection against measles, mumps, and rubella. The first dose is recommended at **12-15 months** of age and the second dose at **4-6 years** of age. The MMR vaccine is strongly endorsed by medical and public health experts as **safe and effective.**

All adults born during or after 1957 should receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine unless they have documented evidence of measles immunity or disease (through a blood test ordered by your physician). Two MMR doses are recommended for all international travelers, healthcare personnel, and students at secondary and post-secondary educational facilities. Infants 6-11 months of age should receive one dose prior to travel abroad.

For more information about immunizations, please visit [www.kanehealth.com/immunizations.htm](http://www.kanehealth.com/immunizations.htm), [www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us), or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).