

# Public Health Preparedness Newsletter

February 14, 2024

## The Latest News

- New preparedness materials available.
  - Our winter newsletter and flyers about measles, RSV, COVID-19, and the flu are available in multiple languages.
  - To view and order free copies to be delivered to your address, visit: <https://bit.ly/PHPMaterials>.
- The Philadelphia Department of Public Health is currently tracking an outbreak of measles.
  - There are 9 total confirmed cases.
  - No new cases have been identified since 1/16/2024.
  - For the latest updates, visit: <https://bit.ly/Measles2024PHL>
  - Learn more in the FAQ below.
- An increase in shigella cases has been observed in Philadelphia.
  - Shigella is bacteria spread through small amounts of poop that you can't see via person-to-person contact, including sexual contact, or contaminated food or water.
  - Cases have been among people experiencing homelessness and opioid use disorder.
  - There has been a significant increase in cases since October compared with previous months and years.
  - To learn how to protect yourself and your community, go to: <https://bit.ly/ShigellaInfo>

## Frequently Asked Questions on Measles

- **What is measles?**
  - Measles is an extremely contagious virus.
  - It is spread through the air when someone who has measles coughs, sneezes, talks or breathes.
    - Germs can stay in a room for two hours after someone with measles has left.
- **How serious is measles?**
  - About 90% of people who have close contact with an infected person will get measles if they're not vaccinated.
  - About 1 in 5 unvaccinated people who get measles in the United States is hospitalized.
  - As many as 1 out of every 20 children with measles gets pneumonia, the most common cause of death from measles in young children.
  - About 1 child out of every 1,000 who get measles will develop swelling of the brain, which can lead to convulsions and can leave the child deaf or with intellectual disability.
  - Nearly 1 to 3 of every 1,000 children who become infected with measles will die from respiratory and neurologic complications.
- **What is the best protection against measles?**
  - The MMR vaccine is your best protection against measles and is extremely effective and safe.
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- **What are the symptoms of measles?**
  - The first symptoms of measles are usually:
    - Fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes or pinkeye.
  - A few days after the first symptoms, more symptoms appear. Those symptoms are:
    - Koplik spots, which are tiny white spots in the mouth.
    - Measles rash, which usually begins as flat spots on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet.
      - In people with lighter skin color, the rash appears red.
      - In people with darker skin color, the redness may be harder to see, or it may appear purple or darker than surrounding skin.
    - An even higher fever, which can start when the rash appears.
- **How do I know if I've been exposed to measles?**
  - If you were at any of the sites on the days listed in the link below, you may have been exposed to measles: <https://bit.ly/Measles2024PHL>
- **What should I do if I was possibly exposed to measles?**
  - You should quarantine by staying home and away from others. Contact your healthcare provider immediately to determine if you are immune to measles.
  - People who have not received both doses of MMR vaccine should get vaccinated.
    - Find the measles vaccine here: <https://bit.ly/PhilaMeasles>
- **How do I know if I'm protected against measles?**
  - **You're immune to measles if you:**
    - Were born before 1957, or
    - Have already had measles, or
    - Have received 2 doses of measles-containing virus (MMR or MMRV vaccine) and aren't immune-compromised
- **What should I do if I am immune to measles AND have been exposed?**
  - First confirm that you are immune to measles by contacting your healthcare provider immediately. If you are immune, you don't need to quarantine, even if you were in those buildings on those dates.
  - If you end up getting measles, you still need to isolate when you're contagious, which is 4 days before and 4 days after a measles rash appears.
  - Please contact your healthcare provider if you have any questions or develop symptoms.
- **What should I do if I am NOT immune to measles?**
  - If you or your child aren't immune, you should:
    - Contact your healthcare provider right away, especially if you don't feel well. Tell your doctor about your possible measles exposure.
    - Alert your healthcare provider about your measles exposure before visiting.
    - Stay home until a healthcare provider advises you on next steps. You could give measles to vulnerable people who can get very sick.
- **What should I do if I'm not sure if I'm immune and I was exposed to measles?**
  - Contact your healthcare provider right away, especially if you don't feel well. They can check your records to make sure you've had both doses of MMR vaccine.

- Wear a mask in indoor public spaces and around anyone who is unvaccinated, until you learn your status. This will help prevent others from being exposed.
- **Where can I find an MMR vaccine?**
  - Any child in Philadelphia can get vaccinated for free at any City health center.
    - Call 215-685-2933 to make an appointment.
  - All children can receive MMR at their healthcare provider's office and can find more vaccine options at: <https://bit.ly/PhilaMeasles>.

## COVID-19: Resources and Services

- **Free at-home COVID-19 tests:**
  - **Every U.S. household is eligible to order 4 more free at-home COVID-19 test kits.**
    - Order your free at-home tests here: [https://bit.ly/Covid19\\_test](https://bit.ly/Covid19_test)
    - Call (800) 232-0233. For TTY, call (888) 720-7489.
- **Resource Hubs (2 per household member):** <https://bit.ly/ResourceHubsPHL>
  - No insurance or ID are required.
- **Test2treat.com (6 total tests):** <https://bit.ly/HomeT2T>
  - Those with commercial insurance are not eligible.
- **Free COVID-19 vaccine for uninsured and underinsured Philadelphians**
  - To find out which vaccines you and your loved ones need, go to: <https://bit.ly/FallVax>
  - The Bridge Access Program covers the COVID-19 vaccine for adults who don't have insurance, or if their insurance won't cover the vaccine.
    - Find Bridge Access Program providers here: <https://bit.ly/FreeCOVIDVaccine>
  - COVID-19 vaccines are free for all children in Philadelphia through the Vaccines for Children Program.
    - Find vaccines here: <https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL>
- **Free COVID-19 test kit distribution program**
  - Community-based organizations, event organizers, and venues can apply to receive free at-home test kits and face masks to share with their communities.
  - For more information, go to: <https://bit.ly/TestKitDistrib>
- **Want to offer FREE COVID-19 vaccines to eligible adults at your community event**
  - eTrueNorth can help you offer FREE COVID-19 vaccines to eligible adults at your community event.
  - [Flyer is attached](#); please share with your networks!

## Public Health Preparedness: Resources and Services

- **CDC resources and health promotion materials for people with disabilities**
  - Respiratory virus resources: <https://bit.ly/RespVirusResources>
  - Tailored health promotion materials: <https://bit.ly/CDCHealthPromo>
- **Sign up for Ready Philadelphia**
  - To receive free text alerts to your phone on emergencies or severe weather, text "ReadyPhila" to 888-777.
  - Be the first to know, then spread the word to family and neighbors.

- **Text-to-911 in Philadelphia:** <https://bit.ly/PATextTo911>
  - Individuals who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and those who face communication barriers can use this service to send a text message to 911.

## PDPH Information

- **PDPH COVID-19 website and social media**
  - Information on the ending of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declarations: <https://bit.ly/PHEendPHL>
  - Latest information from PDPH:
    - [phila.gov/COVID](https://phila.gov/COVID), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).
- **PDPH Call Center:**
  - Call 215-685-5488, Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

## How to Stay Connected

- **Join the Community Response Partner Network**
  - This newsletter is sent to the [Community Response Partner Network](#), part of the PDPH Public Health Preparedness Program.
  - Sign up at <https://bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse> to get essential public health information, then pass it on to your family, friends, and community.
- **Questions or suggestions?**
  - Email us at [publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov](mailto:publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov)
  - Leave a message with the Public Health Preparedness Program Outreach Team at 215-429-3016.

This message was sent to the [Community Response Partner Network](#).

The Community Response Partner Network (CRPN) is a listserv of more than 1,500 community and faith-based leaders who have signed up to receive critical information about public health emergencies to share with their networks and residents.

Sign up to receive future newsletters at <https://bit.ly/CRPNnewsletter>.