

Talking Points for Community Leaders: Measles

(Last Updated: April 2025)

The aim of this document is to provide community leaders with accurate public health information on the measles response in Philadelphia. As a community leader, you are trusted to share critical information with neighbors, clients, family, and friends. We hope this document makes it easier for you to help community members stay safe and informed.

There have been a few measles cases reported in and around Philadelphia in 2025.

- The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) may notify the public of a potential measles exposure at specific location and will communicate instructions for follow up.

Measles is the most contagious disease in the world and infection can be severe.

- Measles spreads in the air when someone who has measles coughs, sneezes, breathes, or talks.
 - Germs can last in the air in a room for 2 hours after someone with measles has left.
- Measles can cause pneumonia, swelling of the brain, and even death.

Philadelphia has high community immunity.

- This means that, in general, most people in Philadelphia are protected through vaccination, but measles can be extremely dangerous, especially for babies, young children, pregnant persons and people with weak immune systems.

These groups are not protected and are more at risk of getting sick:

- Infants under age 1, as they have not been vaccinated yet.
- Infants over age 12-15 months, who have not gotten their scheduled measles vaccine.
- Adults and children born after 1957 who have never been sick with measles and are not vaccinated.
- People with weak immune systems.

The MMR (measles) vaccine is the best protection against measles.

- The MMR vaccine is the safest way to protect against measles. Its has been available over 60 years.
- One dose is 93-95% protective against measles disease. Two doses are 97% protective.

If you are traveling internationally with a child, contact your pediatrician ASAP.

- Measles is still common in many parts of the world, and unvaccinated travelers can get sick with measles while travelling and possibly bring the measles virus into the United States.
- The vaccine takes 2 weeks to provide protection. Make sure your child is vaccinated more than 2 weeks before your trip.
- Babies 6-11 months should get their first dose early and children 12 months and older should get an early 2nd dose of MMR.
- Children traveling to domestic outbreak areas also need early MMR vaccine, while adults should contact their healthcare provider to ensure complete vaccination.

→ **More talking points on reverse**

The measles vaccine is widely available and free.

- Contact your pediatrician or healthcare provider to ask about the measles vaccine.
- The MMR vaccine is available at some retail pharmacies, call ahead to confirm.
- Philadelphia residents can find the vaccine for free at all City Health Centers.
 - No ID, cost or insurance required. Just a piece of mail with your address on it.
 - Call 215-685-2933 for an appointment or visit: <https://bit.ly/PhilaMeasles>.

The MMR (measles) vaccine provides lifelong protection.

- The measles vaccine is a routine vaccine, recommended for babies at 12 months and again when a child turns 4. After 2 doses, protection is lifelong.
 - The measles vaccine is typically given with other vaccines.
 - The immune response tends to be similar with one vaccine or multiple vaccines.
- Adults born before 1957 most likely had measles disease when they were children and have immunity to measles that lasts a lifetime. They may not need a vaccination.
- To request your vaccination record: Visit <https://bit.ly/VaxRecordPHL> or call **215-685-5488**.

The risk of measles infection in Philadelphia is low; however, here are the signs and symptoms to be aware of if you are unprotected:

- Signs and symptoms usually appear 7-14 days after exposure and develop in stages.
 - Early signs: Runny nose, fever, coughing, and reddish/watery eyes.
 - Later signs: White spots in their mouth, and rashes that can spread from the face throughout the body.
- Measles rash may vary on different skin tones.
 - For example: On lighter skin, the rash can appear red. On darker skin, it may appear purple or darker than the surrounding skin.

Get your questions answered by a reliable source.

- Contact your healthcare provider.
- Call the PDPH Call Center: **215-685-5488** (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm).
 - Press 2 for Spanish; press 3 for interpretation in your language.
 - Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

Find resources about measles in Philadelphia and share with your contacts.

- Public Health Preparedness Program: <https://bit.ly/PHPCommunityResources>
- Immunizations Program: [Philadelphia Immunization Program | Handouts & Materials](#)

For the most up to date information on measles in Philadelphia:

- Visit <https://bit.ly/MeaslesPHL2025>.
- Join the Community Response Partner Network.
 - Sign up at <https://bit.ly/PHPOutreachNewsletter>.
- Receive up-to-date information about current response efforts, outreach events, and emerging topics in public health to share with trusted contacts.