



ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA HEALTH OFFICIALS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 29, 2024

## **Bay Area Health Officials Urge Vigilance as Measles Cases Rise in the US**

*While the risk of measles exposure remains low for most Bay Area residents, the increasing number of cases nationwide and in California underscores the importance of robust protection against this highly contagious and dangerous illness.*

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY - With measles on the rise nationally, and recent cases locally, Santa Cruz County joins Bay Area health officials in urging everyone to be up to date on measles vaccinations and to watch for symptoms after travel or exposure. The best protection against measles is two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, which protects you for life. This is particularly important for anyone travelling internationally in the upcoming months.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [reports](#) that in 2024 there have been 64 confirmed cases of measles across 17 jurisdictions, with [more than 90 percent of those cases linked to international travel](#), as measles is circulating in many regions in the world, including popular tourist and business destinations. Most cases in the US have been among children aged 12 months and older who had not received the MMR vaccine.

With three major airports, the Bay Area is a hub for international travel, increasing the potential for exposure to this highly contagious virus. For individuals or families that plan to travel internationally, 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's [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.

After returning to the United States, watch for signs and symptoms of measles for 3 weeks. While MMR vaccination rates have been high in the Bay Area, it's important to confirm vaccination history. Having documentation of your vaccination status can help you avoid being quarantined if you are exposed. The CDC offers [accelerated vaccination guidelines](#) for persons, including children under 12 months, who plan to travel internationally.

Measles symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis (pink eye), followed 2-4 days later by a rash. The virus is transmitted through direct contact with infectious droplets or through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Infectious droplets can linger in indoor air for several hours.

About one in five persons infected with measles requires hospitalization, and nearly 1 to 3 of every 1,000 children who become infected with measles will die from respiratory and neurologic complications, [according to the CDC](#). Measles presents the greatest risk to children under 5 years of age, adults over 20 years of age, pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems.

Vaccination is highly effective at preventing measles. The MMR vaccine is recommended for children aged 12-15 months, with a second dose administered between ages 4 and 6. Infants 6-12 months of age can start vaccination early prior to international travel. Teenagers and adults with no evidence of immunity should be vaccinated right away.

“The best way to protect yourself and your family against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases is by getting vaccinated,” said Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Lisa Hernandez.

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 these easy steps to protect themselves and others.**

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