

Measles Outbreak - Health Officer Order

1. What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious disease that is caused by a virus that lives in the nose and throat of infected persons. The symptoms of measles include:

- Fever (101°F or higher)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red watery eyes
- Rash of red spots. Some are slightly raised. Typically starts on the face or hairline and spreads to the rest of the body.

Measles can lead to serious illnesses, hospitalization, and even death. Serious illnesses include:

- Diarrhea
- Ear Infection
- Brain Damage
- Deafness
- Pneumonia

Pregnant women, infants, young children, and persons with a weakened immune system are at the highest risk for serious illnesses. There is no treatment for measles.

2. How is measles spread?

Measles spreads easily through the air when an infected person talks, breathes, coughs or sneezes. Nine out of 10 people who have not had the measles vaccine will get measles if they are exposed to the virus. You can get measles if you share the same air with a person with measles, even up to two hours after the person has left the area. Measles can also spread before the infected person has symptoms.

3. Who is the Health Officer?

The Health Officer is a physician, appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, who enforces laws and takes action to protect the community and prevent disease or injury. Law enforcement may work with the Health Officer, if needed, to enforce Orders that have been issued.

4. Why am I receiving a Health Officer Order?

You're receiving a Health Officer Order because you've been in contact with or exposed to a person diagnosed with the measles and haven't provided required evidence of immunity to measles (i.e., documentation that you received required measles vaccine doses or a blood test result showing that you are immune) to the Department of Public Health. Thus, you are at risk for contracting measles and spreading it to others.



Key Points

- Measles spreads easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Measles is a health risk for students and staff who have never had measles or have not received recommended measles vaccine doses.
- Following the precautions in the Health Officer Order can prevent the spread of measles.

For more information:

Measles

www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html

Low or No Cost Vaccine Clinics

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs or dial 2-1-1

Immunization Schedules

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules

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5. What does the Health Officer Order require me to do?

The Health Officer Order is a legal order, which requires that you strictly follow a set of precautions to protect yourself and reduce the chance that you will spread measles to others. The order includes the phone number of the Public Health Nurse for you to call with any questions related to this order. Until you have been released from the Order:

- Remain at home/your residence and restrict your movement. You may not attend school or work outside of your home/residence. Avoid any public places where you may come into contact with many people, including classrooms, study halls, libraries, places of worship, movie theaters, grocery stores, shopping centers, gyms, outdoor events, and sporting events.
- If you have any appointments that would require you to leave your home/residence, such as doctor's appointments, dental appointments, and school-related appointments, inform the Public Health Nurse. If it's necessary for you to visit a doctor, call the doctor before going to the office and let them know that you had contact with the measles virus, so they can take infection control precautions to reduce the chance of spread of measles.
- Do not use public or commercial transportation, such as buses, subways, trains, taxis, ride-shares, or airplanes.
- Don't have anyone visit you in your home/residence unless they have been screened and approved by Public Health staff and are immune to measles.
- If you plan to move to a different room/residence, please inform the Public Health Nurse.
- Take steps to prevent the spread of the germs that can cause measles, such as always covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- If you have symptoms of measles, such as fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and/or rash, call the Public Health Nurse at the phone number listed in the Health Officer Order.
- Cooperate with our Public Health staff, who will share information, answer your questions, help you to follow these precautions, and monitor your compliance.

6. How long am I required to follow the precautions in the Health Officer Order?

The Health Officer Order will remain in effect until 1) You provide documentation that you received the required number of doses of measles (MMR) vaccine, or 2) You submit results of a blood test that show that you're immune to measles, or 3) You've reached the end of the incubation period. In these cases, you will receive a notice that releases you from the Order.

7. What should I do if I don't feel well or develop symptoms that might be related to measles?

If you do not feel well or if you have any symptoms that could be related to measles, such as fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and/or rash, call the Public Health Nurse right away. The Nurse will help you to decide whether you should seek medical care. If you do need to see a doctor, call the doctor before going to the office and let the office know that you were exposed to the measles virus, so they can take steps to reduce the chance of spread of measles.

