

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2015

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FLORIDA RESIDENTS URGED TO GET VACCINATED AGAINST MEASLES
~ Contacts of measles cases being followed in Florida ~

TALLAHASSEE—The Florida Department of Health is working with other state and federal officials to monitor individuals who may have been exposed to measles cases across the state. In the past two weeks, four cases of measles have been identified and reported among travelers with unknown or no measles vaccinations who visited Florida. Two cases involved international travelers.

"It's important all Floridians make sure they have received the measles vaccination because those who are fully immunized have very little risk of developing the disease," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "The department is prepared to deal with any potential emerging infectious disease threat and is committed to ensuring the safety of all residents and visitors in Florida. Out of an abundance of caution, it is important for those who think they may have been exposed to measles to contact their health care provider for guidance right away."

While there are no confirmed cases among Florida residents at this time, people who may have come into contact with infected individuals are being notified and counseled. The department continues to work closely with the medical provider community in an effort to maintain its current level of readiness to identify cases and respond to any diagnosed cases of measles in Florida.

"The smartest step any resident can take to protect themselves against this growing health threat is to get vaccinated," said Dr. Alan Pillersdorf, President, Florida Medical Association. "Vaccines are available at your local doctor's office and at all Local County Health Departments at a minimal cost or free. These vaccines are safe and play a vital role in creating a barrier between the human population and this virus."

The most effective form of protection from this virus is through vaccination. Children should be immunized against measles with the combination measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) and should receive two doses, with the first at 12 to 15 months of age, and the second at four to six years of age. People with underlying health conditions should discuss with their health care provider to determine the need for additional booster doses. The department encourages all Floridians who have not been immunized to get vaccinated immediately.

“In Florida, more than 93 percent of kindergartners are vaccinated against this potentially life threatening virus,” said Dr. Tommy Schechtman, President, Florida Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics. “But in a time when vaccines are readily available and safe, every child who can be, should be vaccinated. It’s our best defense against this re-emerging healthcare threat and one any responsible parent or guardian should want for their child to keep them healthy.” Measles is very rare in countries and regions of the world where vaccination coverage is high. There are still sporadic cases of measles in the United States because travelers who are not fully immunized can become infected before or during travel abroad and spread the infection to those who are not protected by the vaccine.

Measles is spread through the air by breathing, coughing or sneezing and is highly contagious. It can be transmitted from four days before the rash becomes visible to four days after the rash appears. The symptoms of measles generally begin approximately seven to 14 days after a person is exposed to someone with measles, and include the following.

- Blotchy rash
- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Feeling run down, achy (malaise)
- Tiny white spots with bluish-white centers found inside the mouth (Koplik's spots)

Anyone who has these symptoms should contact his or her healthcare provider. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html.

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