

NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY Additional Confirmed Measles Cases in Lea County

February 21, 2025

Background

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is notifying healthcare providers that 9 measles cases have been confirmed in Lea County, NM; none of the NM cases have been hospitalized. Lea County borders Gaines County, Texas where at least 90 cases have been confirmed, including 16 who were hospitalized. The 9 confirmed New Mexico cases have no known links to the Texas cases- indicating wider community exposure and heightened risk of measles transmission in Lea County.

Healthcare providers should be vigilant for febrile rash in unvaccinated or under-vaccinated patients of any age, especially those with recent travel to the outbreak area or exposure to known cases. Five of the confirmed New Mexico cases are in adults 35-64 years of age. It is important that your patients be up to date with measles vaccination, and critical for patients with suspected measles to be promptly recognized, isolated, **reported to 1-833-796-8773**, and tested to prevent further spread.

NMDOH measles updates can be found on our website <http://measles.doh.nm.gov/>

Management of suspect cases

- **If measles is suspected, immediately notify NMDOH by calling 1-833-SWNURSE, option 4 (1-833-796-8773) for further guidance.**
- **Testing of febrile people without a rash is not recommended and may lead to false negative results. The PCR test is unlikely to detect measles virus until the onset of rash.**
- **There is no need to test asymptomatic contacts, see “management of contacts” below**
- **Obtain a throat swab or nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport medium for PCR testing at the State Public Health Laboratory, serology is not needed.**
- **Patients suspected of having measles should be instructed to isolate themselves at home pending test results.**

Measles is characterized by a prodrome of fever, malaise, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis, followed by a maculopapular rash. The rash begins on the head and spreads down the body, and usually appears about 14 days after exposure, but ranges from 7-21 days after exposure. A person with measles is contagious from 4 days before the rash begins through 4 days after it appears. Measles is extremely contagious, and **NMDOH recommends that patients with suspected measles (fever and rash at triage) not be allowed in the waiting room with others.** Preferably patients are initially evaluated outside the clinic, e.g in the car or as the last patient of the day. If measles is suspected, the patient should wear a mask and immediately be isolated in a negative-pressure room or a private room with a closed door. Any room occupied by a suspected measles patient should not be used for two hours after the patient leaves, due to measles virus remaining suspended in the air during that time.

Management of confirmed cases

No specific antiviral therapy is available. Medical care is supportive to help relieve symptoms and address complications such as bacterial infections. Complications of measles including otitis media, bronchopneumonia, croup, and diarrhea occur commonly in young children and immunocompromised hosts. Even in previously healthy children, measles can cause serious illness requiring hospitalization. About one in five measles cases require hospitalization.

Confirmed cases should isolate at home *through day 4* after rash onset, with onset date being day zero, and instructed to call their medical provider should symptoms worsen.

Management of exposed contacts

Asymptomatic exposed contacts do not need testing. If an exposed contact develops febrile rash illness, treat as a suspect case.

Measles vaccine should be considered in all exposed individuals who are vaccine eligible and have not been vaccinated or only received one dose. Measles vaccine administered to susceptible individuals within 72 hours of exposure can provide protection or disease modification. If exposure does not result in infection, the vaccine can provide protection against future exposures. See Table 1 below.

AGE RANGE	MEASLES IMMUNE STATUS	PEP TYPE DEPENDING ON TIME AFTER INITIAL EXPOSURE		
		≤3 days	4-6 days	>6 days
All ages	Immune (2 MMR doses, or born before 1957, or IgG positive)	PEP not indicated		
<6 months	Non-immune due to age	Give IMIG Home quarantine for 28 days after last exposure		PEP not indicated (too late) Home quarantine for 21 days after last exposure
6-11 months	Non-immune due to age	Give MMR (preferred over IG) No quarantine needed	Give IMIG Home quarantine for 28 days after last exposure	PEP not indicated (too late) Home quarantine for 21 days after last exposure
≥12 months	Non-immune (zero doses of MMR or IgG negative)	Give MMR No quarantine needed	PEP not indicated Home quarantine for 21 days after last exposure give MMR vaccine to protect against future exposure	
≥12 months	1 dose of MMR vaccine	Give 2 nd MMR dose if ≥ 28 days from last dose of live vaccine. No quarantine needed	Household or documented contacts (higher risk exposure) to confirmed/suspect case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain IgG titers to determine immunity, home quarantine while awaiting results. • If IgG negative quarantine for 21 days after last exposure • Give 2nd dose MMR to protect against future exposures • Age 1-3 years less likely to get sick due to 1 dose of MMR no quarantine needed 	

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Adapted from RedBook 2021-2024 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases 32nd edition

High-risk contacts, such as those who are pregnant or immunocompromised, may need additional evaluation.

The Department of Health is contacting people identified as potentially exposed and providing guidance to prevent further spread. Additional exposures in the community may come from people who visited the following locations during the specified days and times:

- Saturday 2/8
 - Walmart 3800 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM on Saturday 2/8 between the hours of 8:00 and 11:00AM
- Thursday 2/13
 - Conoco Phillips Hobbs 5208 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 8:00AM and 6:00PM
 - Stripes 5000 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 11:00AM and 1:30PM
 - CORE gym 4827 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 4:00PM-7:00PM
- Friday 2/14
 - Conoco Phillips Hobbs 5208 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 8:00AM and 6:00PM
 - Stripes 5000 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 11:00AM and 1:30PM
 - CORE gym 4827 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 2:15PM-5:30PM
- Monday 2/17
 - Conoco Phillips Hobbs 5208 N Lovington Hwy, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 8:00AM and 6:00PM

Vaccination

There is a safe and highly effective measles vaccine available, and healthcare settings should ensure that all staff have received two doses of MMR vaccine or have laboratory evidence of immunity to measles. MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine is licensed for use in persons 12 months or older; MMRV (measles-mumps-rubella-varicella) vaccine is licensed for use in persons 12 months through 12 years old. One dose has a median effectiveness of 93%, while two doses have a median effectiveness of 97%.

Children should receive their first dose at 12-15 months, and their second dose at 4-6 years. During community outbreaks clinicians can consider early vaccination of children 6 to 11 months of age for

whom the benefit of early vaccination may outweigh the risks. Infants who get 1 dose of MMR vaccine before their first birthday should get 2 more doses according to the routinely recommended schedule.

Adults should check their vaccination history. If they have documentation of 2 doses of MMR, they are considered fully vaccinated, and no further action is needed. If they have 1 documented dose of MMR, they should consider a 2nd dose of MMR for full protection.

If an adult doesn't know their vaccine history, and have no documentation, they should consider getting a dose of MMR, and should speak with their provider

Additional Resources:

[New Mexico Department of Health Measles Updates](#)

For more information about measles, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html> or call the NMDOH Center for Health Protection at **1-833-SWNURSE** (1-833-796-8773).

Tips for successful vaccine conversations with parents and caregivers can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/hcproviders/talkingtopatients.html>.

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjz/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

Please Note that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **"New Mexico Health Alert Network"** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.

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Table 1 Management of Contacts

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