

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEY POINTS FOR MEDIA:

- The state's first reported case of measles this year involves an adult in the Metro East area
- IDPH is working with local officials to contact anyone who may have been exposed to the illness
- Immunization remains the best protection against measles; two doses of the MMR vaccine is 97% effective

First Measles Case of 2026 Identified in Metro East Area

IDPH reminds Illinoisans to make sure they are up to date on immunization

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reporting this year's first confirmed case of measles in the state in an adult residing in the Metro East area. The individual recently returned from travel out of state.

IDPH is working with local, state and federal health officials to investigate all potential locations where others may have been exposed to the individual while that person was infectious. One community location in Illinois has been identified so far: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Collinsville. People attending church on February 8 between 8:00am and 12:15pm were potentially exposed to measles. The church has notified congregants of this exposure and provided guidance on how to protect themselves and their loved ones. For exposure locations where people can be individually identified, the local health department is notifying them directly. Additional potential exposure locations have been identified in other states.

Most people are vaccinated against measles routinely in childhood and are not at high risk of contracting the disease; two doses of the measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine are 97% effective in preventing measles. Most at risk are people who have not been vaccinated, including infants – initial measles vaccine is recommended at 12-15 months – or people who can't get vaccinated because of other health concerns.

Anyone exposed and not fully vaccinated against measles should monitor themselves for a period of 21 days from the suspected date of exposure. Individuals should stay alert for any signs and symptoms of measles such as rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, and notify their local health department if they become symptomatic. If you are showing symptoms of measles and need medical attention, call ahead to your healthcare provider so appropriate precautions can be taken to prevent any further spread of the illness.

“This first reported case of measles in Illinois in 2026 is a reminder to our Illinois residents that this disease can be prevented with up-to-date vaccination,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “With almost a thousand cases in the US so far this year, the IDPH team has been preparing, working closely with local public health and health care partners on strategies to reduce spread and minimize outbreaks. IDPH is urging clinicians to consider a measles diagnosis in patients with consistent symptoms and alert their local health department immediately if they suspect a case.

“The key to preventing measles is the highly effective measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two doses of measles vaccine are 97% effective in preventing measles,” said Dr. Vohra. “I recommend that our Illinois residents make sure that they and their family members are up to date on the MMR vaccine and all other age-appropriate immunizations.”

After exposure, measles symptoms can take from seven to 21 days to develop. Individuals who experience measles symptoms should contact a health care provider by phone or email BEFORE going to a medical office or emergency department. It is important to share specifically that you have a concern that you may have measles so that appropriate precautions can be taken to prevent further spread of the illness.

IDPH advises people traveling internationally or to a U.S. state with a measles outbreak to confirm their vaccination in advance. Unvaccinated or under-vaccinated individuals should ideally receive their vaccine at least two weeks prior to travel to an area with a high risk of measles. To find a nearby vaccination location, people can utilize the IDPH vaccine locator [tool](#).

Health care providers are reminded to immediately contact their local health department to report any suspected cases of measles; the health department can assist providers with arranging for testing and additional steps as needed.

While this is the first confirmed case of measles in Illinois this year, measles has been on the rise around the country, surging in 2025 to the highest level in decades. Measles had been considered largely eradicated from the U.S. since the year 2000, but that elimination status is now in jeopardy because of the nationwide surge in cases. Illinois saw a total of 14 cases statewide in 2025.

More information on the disease can be found on the IDPH website at [Measles](#).

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