



Bell County Public Health District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEASLES HEALTH ALERT/ADVISORY

Date: February 6, 2019

Bell County Public Health District (BCPHD) had 4 possible measles cases under investigation. As of today three (3) of the four (4) possible cases have been ruled out as measles and one (1) has been confirmed as a case. The confirmed case is in a child residing in Western Bell County. The child is not school aged and was too young to have been vaccinated. There has been very limited contact with the public. All family members are up to date on vaccinations.

Vaccination remains the most effective method for preventing measles. Measles is highly contagious and early identification remains a critical public health measure to reduce the spread of the disease. We are asking providers to please consider measles if they see patients with the clinical signs and symptoms described below.

Measles (rubeola) is a highly contagious febrile rash illness caused by a virus transmitted via the respiratory route. The incubation period averages 10-12 days from exposure and it typically takes about 14 days from exposure to the virus for a rash to develop. The early symptoms generally last 2-4 days and include fever often peaking at 103°-105°F.

Fever is followed by the onset of cough, runny nose, and/or eye inflammation. Koplik spots, while not always present, are considered to be a characteristic measles symptom and appear as blue-white spots in the mouth and throat. This typically occurs 1-2 days before rash to 1-2 days afterwards. The measles rash is another characteristic symptom that usually begins at the hairline and gradually proceeds to face and upper neck and from there downward and outward. Other symptoms of measles include loss of appetite, diarrhea (especially in infants). Complications can include otitis media, pneumonia, encephalitis, seizures and death.

Patients are contagious from 4 days before onset of rash to 4 days after appearance of rash.

During an outbreak of measles, unvaccinated healthcare workers regardless of birth year who lack laboratory evidence of immunity should receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine. Exclude healthcare personnel without evidence of immunity from duty from day 5-21 after last exposure, regardless of post-exposure prophylaxis.

While it is rare that vaccinated individuals develop measles, it can happen. Vaccinated individuals may have an abnormal clinical presentation—typically shorter rash duration or atypical rash presentation, and possible lack of fever, cough, runny nose or eye inflammation.

Disease Reporting in Texas

Several Texas laws ([Health & Safety Code, Chapters 81, 84, and 87](#)) require specific information regarding notifiable conditions be provided to the local health department. Health care providers, hospitals, laboratories, schools, childcare facilities and others are required to report patients who are suspected of having measles ([Chapter 97, Title 25, Texas Administrative Code](#)).

In Texas, suspicion of measles is required to be reported immediately.

Do not wait for laboratory confirmation to report measles.

Measles reports should be made to the by calling 254-773-4457 during business hours. After hours reports can be made on our 24/7 line at 254-773-4457.

Vaccination Information

Measles is preventable with the MMR vaccine. MMR protects against measles, mumps and rubella. It is recommended that children get two doses of MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. Teens and adults should also be up to date on their MMR vaccinations. The vaccine is safe and effective and two doses of the vaccine are 97% effective at prevention measles. One dose is 93% effective ¹.

For more information on vaccines you may contact your provider or our immunizations section at 254-939-2091.

We encourage anyone in need of vaccination to visit their provider. BCPHD does also provide vaccinations. For more information please visit our website at www.bellcountyhealth.org or call the previously mentioned number with questions about vaccination. You may also find our clinic schedules on our website.

For information on vaccine exemptions in Texas please visit the Texas DSHS Website on vaccine exemptions [here](#).