



Ohio Measles Outbreaks

Situation

Ohio is currently experiencing an outbreak on measles. On April 21, 2014, the Ohio Department of Health was notified by the Knox County Health Department about suspected measles cases. The first identified cases were unvaccinated travelers returning from the Philippines, which has been experiencing a large measles outbreak for several months. As of early June, the illness had spread to seven north-central Ohio counties (Ashland, Coshocton, Holmes, Knox, Richland, Stark and Wayne). The illness has also spread to Highland County which is in south-west Ohio. As of June 12, there are 314 confirmed measles, making it the largest outbreak in the U.S. since 1994. Up-to-date statistics are posted on the ODH website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/features/odhfeatures/Measles%202014.aspx>.

Response

Vaccination is the most effective way to minimize the spread of measles. When individuals are fully vaccinated, the mumps-measles-rubella (MMR) vaccine is 97 percent effective in preventing measles. ODH, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is working with affected local health jurisdictions to investigate these outbreaks and institute prevention and control measures.

As of early June, ODH had distributed more than 16,600 doses of the MMR vaccine to local health jurisdictions. The majority of the vaccine (15,730 doses) was distributed in response to the measles outbreak, and local health jurisdictions had administered 10,200 doses by then.

Vaccinations are important for all Ohioans planning to travel to measles outbreak areas across the U.S. and abroad. CDC information on measles outbreaks and travel is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>. Ohioans are urged to talk with their healthcare provider to make sure that they are up-to-date on their vaccinations. Contracting measles is especially serious for infants younger than one-year-old – but MMR vaccination is not routinely recommended for them. Parents are encouraged to talk with their healthcare provider before traveling with an infant to a measles outbreak area.

Chronology

- June 6: More than 16,000 doses of the MMR vaccine have been distributed to Ohio's local health jurisdictions to date, and they have administered more than 10,000 doses thus far.
- May 29: CDC holds a national press conference to announce that the U.S. is experiencing its largest measles outbreak since 1994.
- May 8: ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases staff members begin to provide periodic on-site assistance to affected local health jurisdictions.
- May 2-3: ODH develops measles guidance for Ohio schools in collaboration with CDC and distributes it to school nurses, Head Start Programs and local health jurisdictions.
- May 1: ODH establishes a regularly updated measles homepage on its website containing an overview of the measles outbreak, number of confirmed cases, links to the local health jurisdictions in affected counties, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions about measles.
- May 1: ODH issues measles guidance to healthcare providers.
- April 24: ODH and its public health partners begin regular conference calls with CDC regarding the measles outbreak.
- April 23: ODH alerts Ohio hospitals about the suspected measles cases.
- April 21: Knox County Health Department alerts ODH about a possible measles outbreak.