

## Florida reports 11th measles case of 2024, this time linked to international travel

March 25 2024, by Caroline Catherman, Orlando Sentinel

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An electron micrograph of the measles virus. Credit: CDC/ Courtesy of Cynthia S. Goldsmith

Florida reported another measles case on Friday, bringing the state's total to 11 cases this year amid a worldwide uptick in a highly infectious disease once thought to be eliminated in the U.S.

The case was identified in South Florida's Martin County, in an individual aged between 55 and 59. It was linked to travel outside of the country, according to data from the state [health](#) department's web-based reportable disease surveillance system.

"A travel-related case of a communicable disease is not abnormal and should be distinguished with appropriate context. ... We recommend that the Orlando Sentinel stops attempting to be armchair epidemiologists," Grant Kemp, Florida Department of Health spokesman, said in an emailed response to questions about the case.

Florida recorded two measles cases last year, both linked to international travel.

In addition to the new Martin County case, there have been nine cases in Broward County this year—largely linked to local spread among kids at Manatee Bay Elementary—and one in Polk County related to travel. No additional cases have occurred at Manatee Bay Elementary since Feb. 16, according to a March 8 news release from the governor's office.

Even more people with measles have visited the state but are not counted in its public online tally, although the Florida Department of Health is aware and conducts contact tracing on any cases seen in Florida.

As of March 21, there have been 64 cases across 17 states, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CBS News uncovered records last week showing that at least three [measles cases](#) in other states were linked to trips to Florida, following a report by the Orlando Sentinel that revealed Orlando Health had treated at least one case that was not reflected in the state's tally. It's unclear if the out-of-state cases were related to the ones Orlando Health treated.

The [deadly disease](#) is highly infectious: 9 out of 10 unvaccinated people will catch it if exposed. About 1 in 5 [unvaccinated people](#) who get measles are hospitalized, as many as 1 in 20 kids who get it will develop pneumonia, and 1 in 1,000 will die, according to the CDC.

The disease can be easily prevented with vaccination. Two doses are about 97% effective at preventing someone from catching it for their entire lifetime.

To prevent measles, the CDC recommends children get two doses of the vaccine, with a first dose at ages 12 through 15 months, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. The CDC estimates communities need 95% vaccination to confer herd immunity.

Florida falls short of that goal. Statewide, in 2022—the most recent data publicly available—91.7% of Florida kindergarteners had gotten the immunizations required to attend school, including the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. It was 93% the year prior.

Childhood vaccinations have been in decline across the world over the last several years amid a rising tide of what experts say is misinformation about their safety.

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