

Minnesota health officials say increase in measles cases highlights need for vaccination

September 2 2024, by Kristi Miller, Pioneer Press



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Minnesota health officials are urging families to stay up to date on measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines as more unvaccinated

children in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area are getting ill from a measles outbreak.

Since May, 30 cases of measles have been reported in the state, affecting children from 7 months to 10 years old. One of the 30 cases involved an adult. One in three of the cases required the person to be hospitalized.

Health officials say measles is a "highly contagious rash illness that spreads easily by coughing, sneezing or even being in the same room with someone who has measles. It can be spread before someone shows symptoms. The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. Measles can cause serious disease leading to hospitalization and even death."

Anyone who is not vaccinated is at risk of getting sick with measles.

"Measles is currently circulating, and infections can be severe," said Dr. Ruth Lynfield, state epidemiologist and medical director at the Minnesota Department of Health. "I urge all [parents](#) to be sure that their children are vaccinated because we know that vaccination offers the best protection."

"While parents may not be able to protect their kids from all the risks that come with childhood, you can protect your child from [measles](#)," said Dr. Abdul Abdi, pediatrician at Children's Minnesota. "Some families seem concerned that the MMR vaccine is somehow linked to autism, but this is a myth."

The Minnesota Vaccines for Children program provides free or low-cost vaccines for children in Minnesota who are uninsured, enrolled in a Minnesota health care program like Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, or children who are American Indian or Alaska Natives. Over 750 health care providers in Minnesota are enrolled in MnVFC and

approximately half of Minnesotan children are eligible, officials said.

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Citation: Minnesota health officials say increase in measles cases highlights need for vaccination (2024, September 2) retrieved 5 September 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-09-minnesota-health-measles-cases-highlights.html>

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