

MDH expands advice for measles vaccination to make sure more children in state are protected.

With 41 confirmed cases of measles, as of May 5, 2017, in Hennepin, Ramsey, and Crow Wing counties, and more cases likely in the current outbreak, state health officials have expanded the recommendation for vaccination in an effort to curb the spread of disease.

Measles is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. It spreads very easily among unvaccinated people. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has made the following recommendations to protect children and adults during outbreaks.

- All children 12 months and older who have not received a Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine should get the first dose as soon as possible.
- Adults born in 1957 or later who have never received the MMR vaccine and have never had measles should get the vaccine as soon as possible.

For children who have had one dose of the MMR vaccine:

- In counties where measles cases have been identified (currently Hennepin, Ramsey, and Crow Wing), children 12 months and older who received their first dose of the MMR vaccine at least 28 days ago should get the second dose as soon as possible.
- All Somali Minnesotan children statewide who received their first dose of MRR vaccine at least 28 days ago should receive the second dose now.
- Healthcare providers may recommend an early second dose of the MMR vaccine during routine appointments for children statewide.

The MMR vaccine is given to children in two doses, typically at 12 months and between 4-6 years. The first dose offers good protection, and the second dose provides extra security. The accelerated vaccine schedule recommended is common during outbreaks.

Babies younger than 12 months may have some protection from their mothers if their mothers have been vaccinated or have had measles. The current outbreak has caused disease almost exclusively in children older than 12 months.

For parents that are concerned about the cost of the vaccine, the Minnesota Vaccine for Children program will cover the cost of the vaccine for eligible children under the age of 18 years.

Symptoms of measles include high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes followed by a rash that usually starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body. Measles is spread through the air by coughing or sneezing. You can get measles just by being in the same room as someone who has measles. If you believe that you or your child has measles, please contact your healthcare provider before going to the clinic so that they can take measures to protect other people.

If you have questions about your or your child's immunization status, or to schedule an appointment to receive the MMR vaccine, contact your healthcare provider or Brea Hamdorf at Aitkin County Health and Human Services at 218-927-7200.