

# Addressing Colleges' Concerns about Measles

## 1. Does measles pose a health risk to colleges?

Measles is a serious disease that spreads very easily in people who have never had measles or measles vaccine. Measles is a health risk for students and staff that have never had measles or measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccines. Higher numbers of unvaccinated students and staff mean higher risk of diseases that spread from person-to-person, like the measles.



## 2. Why are there more measles cases in the news lately?

Most people in the U.S. are protected against measles through vaccination. The U.S. has seen more cases than usual because fewer people have gotten completely vaccinated against measles recently and because of travel to or from places where measles is more common.

## 3. What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles can cause these symptoms:

- Fever (101°F or higher)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red watery eyes
- A rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body

Measles can cause complications, such as ear infections and diarrhea. It can also cause serious illness, such as pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling around the brain), and even death.

## 4. What should schools do if someone on campus has measles?

If someone has known or suspected measles, they should be excluded from school until they are cleared to return by Public Health.

Contacts to someone with known or suspected measles who don't have proof that they are immune to measles should also be excluded from campus until they are cleared to return by Public Health. There may be circumstances where the County Health Officer will issue quarantine orders to contacts of known measles cases who don't have proof of vaccination or immunity.

### Key Points:

- Measles is highly contagious and spreads easily.
- Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles.
- Check with your doctor to get a copy of your vaccination record or to check if you're protected.

### Where can the public go for more information?

Los Angeles County,  
Department of Public Health  
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/default.htm>

List of State and Local Immunization Registries  
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/contacts-locate-records.html>

California Immunization Registry (CAIR)  
[www.helpdesk@cairweb.org](http://www.helpdesk@cairweb.org) or  
call (800) 578 – 7889.

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### 5. How can schools prevent the spread of measles?

Follow these tips to keep your school healthy:

**Ask students and staff if they know their vaccination status.** Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep from getting and spreading the measles. People should get the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine if they haven't been vaccinated or if they don't have written proof of vaccination. All students should have received two doses of MMR at least 28 days apart. If you're not sure if you've been vaccinated, contact your doctor's office to obtain copy of your immunization record. You can also check with the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) or the local registry in the state where you received your shots to see if they have your records.

**Ask students and staff to know the symptoms of measles.** Teachers, school personnel, and students should know the symptoms of measles, so they can take action when students and staff may be ill.

**If students or staff are feeling ill with possible measles symptoms, they should call their medical provider before going to a clinic or doctor's office** This prevents the spread of measles in doctors' offices.

### 6. Where can students get vaccinated?

Students can call their doctor or school's health center to get an MMR vaccine, which may be covered by insurance. They may also be able to get vaccinated at a pharmacy or at a clinic offering no or low-cost vaccinations. Call 2-1-1 or visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip) to find a nearby clinic.

### 7. How should schools address families' concerns about measles?

Emphasize that measles can be prevented with the MMR vaccine. Making sure their immunizations are up-to-date, can help them protect themselves, their loved ones, and their community.

Let students and staff know that the LA County Department Public Health works to stop people from getting and spreading disease by:

- Investigating all measles cases in the county
- Identifying people who may have had contact with someone with measles
- Educating health care providers regarding measles symptoms, diagnosis, and reporting
- Taking safety measures, like giving the MMR vaccine or restricting participation in school or work, for unvaccinated people who may have come in contact with measles
- Reporting cases to the California Department of Public Health to assess the impact of measles across the state.