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**Cook County Public Health Officials Say Recent Measles Cases
Important Reminder to Get Vaccinated**

BRIDGEVIEW, Ill. – With recent measles cases in Chicago, Cook County public health officials are strongly urging residents to get vaccinated against measles if they aren’t already.

Measles is a very serious respiratory disease that is highly contagious and especially dangerous for babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems. Complications from measles can lead to pneumonia, seizures, hearing loss, life-long brain damage, and death.

“Most people are routinely vaccinated as children and are not at high risk of getting measles,” said Cook County Department of Public Health Chief Operating Officer Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “We are most concerned about those who have not been vaccinated. Measles is so contagious that 90 percent of unvaccinated people will get it, if exposed.”

Two doses of the MMR vaccine are recommended as the best way to protect against measles, mumps, and rubella.

Children should get their first dose between 12 and 15 months, and second dose between 4 and 6 years of age. Teenagers and adults with no evidence of immunity should be vaccinated as soon as possible.

“The MMR vaccine is safe and effective,” said Dr. Hasbrouck. “Two doses have been shown to be 97 percent effective at preventing measles. It is available at most doctor’s offices and pharmacies.”

The measles virus spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes and can linger in a room for up to 2 hours. According to the CDC, symptoms typically appear 7-to-14 days after contact with the virus. Initial symptoms include high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. The distinctive rashes associated with measles typically appear 3-to-5 days after symptoms begin. Individuals with measles are contagious starting four days before through four days after rash onset.

If you or a loved one develops measles symptoms, CCDPH recommends calling a healthcare provider before going to a medical office or emergency department, so arrangements can be made to prevent the virus from spreading to others. The healthcare provider will determine whether testing is required.

Healthcare providers across the region should be on alert for patients who present with symptoms that are consistent with measles infection and take immediate mitigation measures.

Measles cases have recently been reported in Chicago. [The latest information can be found on CDPH’s website.](#) There have been no confirmed cases in suburban Cook County so far this year, however, CCDPH confirmed five measles cases last October. Those cases were in an apartment building, which affected two families in two separate units, who had no contact with each other.

“That investigation underscored just how infectious measles can be,” said Dr. Hasbrouck. “We strongly encourage everyone to check their vaccination records and get vaccinated if needed.”

An increased number of measles cases have occurred around the country and world in recent months, due to lower vaccination coverage and international travel. As of March 7, CDC reported 45 measles cases in 17 U.S. states so far this year, compared to 58 cases in all of 2023.

For more information about measles and the MMR vaccine, visit the [CDC website](#).

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