

# PRESS RELEASE



Cook County  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 29, 2024

## Cook County Confirms First Suburban Measles Case Connected to Recent Cases in Chicago

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) has confirmed the first suburban Cook County measles case this year. The case was identified in a suburban Cook County resident who was exposed during their time in a shelter for new arrivals in Chicago. The resident has recovered and is no longer contagious.

CCDPH is working to identify and notify people who may have been exposed to this recent suburban Cook County case. Vaccinations and testing for immunity will be provided to those who aren't sure if they have natural or vaccine-induced immunity. The latest information about case counts in suburban Cook County and other municipalities can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) [measles webpage](#).

CCDPH is strongly encouraging all suburban Cook County residents to stay up to date with all recommended vaccinations, including for [measles](#).

"People who have not been vaccinated or previously infected are at risk of getting measles," according to CCDPH Chief Operating Officer Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. "Fewer people have chosen to get the measles vaccine in recent years, resulting in an increase in cases in 2023 and 2024. Before then, there were no measles cases reported in Illinois since 2019."

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease that spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. The virus can linger in a room for up to two hours and can be especially dangerous for babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems. Measles symptoms appear up to 21 days following exposure. Symptoms of measles include rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. A person is generally contagious the four days before and four days after the onset of a rash. Complications from measles can lead to pneumonia, seizures, hearing loss, life-long brain damage and death. Most individuals are vaccinated against measles routinely in childhood and are not at high risk.

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There has been an increase in the number of measles cases around the country and world in recent months, due in part to higher vaccine exemption rates, lower vaccination coverage, and international travel. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of March 21, 2024, a total of 64 measles cases were reported by 17 jurisdictions: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York City, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

“The uptick in cases nationally underscores just how infectious measles can be,” said Dr. Hasbrouck. “The measles vaccine is safe, effective, and essential to stopping the spread of the virus. Two doses of measles vaccine have been shown to be 97 percent effective in preventing measles.”

An individual who may have been exposed to measles should check with their healthcare provider about protection through prior vaccination. The healthcare provider will determine the need for testing if symptoms develop. If an individual develops symptoms of measles, CCDPH recommends calling a healthcare provider before going to a medical office or emergency department for evaluation to ensure that special arrangements can be made to protect other patients and medical staff from possible exposure.

Illinois residents can check their immunization records maintained in the Illinois immunization registry via the IDPH Vax Verify portal.

Individuals who are traveling out of the country, including children over the age of 6 months, should talk to their healthcare provider about whether an additional dose of MMR vaccine is recommended before travel. For more information about measles, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/measles>.

To make an appointment for measles vaccination at a Cook County Health community health center in Chicago or suburban Cook County call 833-308-1988.

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For more information visit:  
[www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org).

03/29/24



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