

What to Know About Measles

What is measles?

- A highly contagious viral illness that is spread through contact with respiratory droplets or airborne spread while an infected person is present.
- The virus can remain in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area.
- Individuals with measles are infectious from four days before the rash starts through four days after.
- Most people recover from measles within a couple of weeks, but serious complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis, and death may occur.



9 out of 10 unvaccinated close contacts to a case will become sick

What are symptoms of measles?

- Symptoms start with high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes.
- Rash appears three to five days after the first symptoms, with flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline that spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, and legs.
- Common complications of infection include diarrhea and ear infections.

Who is at highest risk for complications?

- Children younger than 5 years of age
- Adults older than 20 years of age
- Pregnant women
- People with weakened immune systems

Measles in Kansas

- In Kansas, from 2006-2024, **51 cases reported.**
- Exposure during international travel leads to sporadic cases and outbreaks.
- Recent rising global measles activity increases risk for cases in U.S.
- **In 2025, the most measles cases reported in U.S. and Kansas since 1991.**

91
Kansas cases
reported in 2025*



87% of cases unvaccinated*



44% of cases 0-4 years old*



9% of cases required a hospital stay*

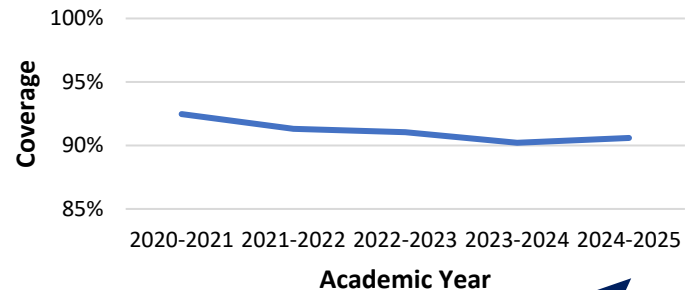
*2025 Data are preliminary as of February 5, 2026. These numbers may change. Data are extracted from disease surveillance system, EpiTrax. Counts include confirmed cases.

Vaccination is the best protection against measles.

Protection starts in early childhood with the MMR vaccine. One dose of MMR vaccine is **93%** effective at preventing measles and two doses are **97%** effective at preventing measles.

Children	Adults
<p>Children should get two doses of MMR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dose 1: 12 to 15 months <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dose 2: 4 to 6 years of age <p>When traveling internationally, infants 6–11 months old should get one dose of the MMR vaccine before travel. Then they should get two more doses after their first birthday.</p>	<p>Most adults should get at least one dose of MMR.</p> <p>Two doses of MMR are recommended for adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveling internationally • Working in healthcare • Attending post-secondary educational institutions (college, university, vocational school, and trade school)

MMR Vaccine Coverage among Kansas Kindergarteners



In the 2020-2021 academic year, 92.5% of kindergarteners were up to date for MMR vaccine. Through the 2024-2025 academic year, coverage **decreased** to 90.6%. Herd immunity against measles requires a vaccination or immunity rate of **at least 95%** to interrupt transmission and prevent large-scale outbreaks.