



HEALTH ALERT

Gregory Cherpes, MD
ODP Medical Director



February 4 , 2026

Confirmed Measles Cases in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) has confirmed 5 cases of measles in Lancaster Co. They are the first case of measles in 2026. The Office of Developmental Programs is sharing this Health Alert with stakeholders for awareness.

Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you have symptoms consistent with measles or believe you may have been exposed to a person with measles.

On January 30, 2026, PA DOH Reported:

“Five confirmed cases of measles in Lancaster County. These represent the first measles cases reported in Pennsylvania and the first outbreak (3 or more linked cases) in 2026. One of the cases is unrelated to the outbreak and exposure occurred during travel. All cases involved are school-aged children and young adults. Health care providers should maintain heightened clinical suspicion for measles particularly among unvaccinated or under-vaccinated patients.

The best protection against measles is vaccination. Getting vaccinated is far safer than contracting measles, mumps, or rubella. While overall population immunity remains high in most U.S. communities, two doses of the vaccine provide 97% protection against measles, compared to 93% with a single dose. Communities achieve herd immunity when at least 95% of residents are vaccinated, reducing the risk of widespread transmission. Unvaccinated individuals face the greatest risk of measles infection and play a disproportionate role in its spread to others.”

Health Alert

Publication Date: 02/04/2026

Supporting Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities and their families to achieve greater independence, choice, and opportunity in their lives.

Healthcare providers Should:

- Have an increased suspicion for measles in patients who present with a febrile-rash illness and follow the proper recommendations for testing and infection control measures.
- Immediately report suspected cases of measles to local public health authorities or to the PA DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

What is Measles:

Measles is an extremely contagious virus that lives in the mucus membranes of the nose and throat of infected people, according to health experts. The virus can be transmitted from person to person through coughing and sneezing. When an infected person sneezes or coughs, droplets spray into the air and those droplets can contain an active and contagious virus which will remain in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours. A healthy person can also be infected with the measles if they breathe the contaminated air or touch an infected surface and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

Symptoms of a Measles infection:

Measles normally begins with a fever (100.4° or higher) that lasts for several days. That's followed by a cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. Two to three days after the symptoms begin, tiny white spots may appear in the mouth. Three to five days after symptoms begin, a flat red spotted rash appears on the face at the hairline and spreads downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. The flat red spots may also be joined by small, raised bumps. Symptoms appear about seven to 14 days on average after exposure, but the appearance of symptoms may take as long as 21 days.

Measles symptoms typically include:

- high fever,
- cough,
- runny nose (coryza),
- red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- rash breaks out 3-5 days after symptoms begin.



Are Measles serious?

Measles can be serious at all ages, but children less than 5 and adults over 20 are more likely to have complications. Complications include:

- Ear infection that can result in permanent hearing loss.
- Diarrhea requiring hospitalization.
- Pneumonia – this is the most common cause of death in children.
- Swelling of the brain- that may lead to brain damage.
- Pregnant women may have their babies early and the baby's weight may be low.
- Of every 1,000 people who get measles 1-2 of them will die.

How does measles spread to other people?

- Infected people can spread measles to others from 4 days before through 4 days after the rash appears.
- It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing.
- When someone sneezes or coughs the virus can live for up to 2 hours in the air.
- If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected.
- More than 90% of the people close to an infected person who have not been vaccinated against measles will also become infected.

Health Alert

Publication Date: 02/04/2026

Supporting Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities and their families to achieve greater independence, choice, and opportunity in their lives.

Can measles be prevented?

- Receiving the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccination can prevent measles. See your health care provider for more information related to the measles vaccination.
- The American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend children receive all vaccines according to the recommended schedule.

Resources

1. [About Measles - CDC](#)
2. [Measles Infographic - CDC](#)
3. [Measles information for healthcare providers - CDC](#)
4. [Measles | Red Book: 2024–2027 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases | Red Book Online | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
5. [Measles Vaccine Recommendations- CDC](#)
6. [Infection control guidelines for measles- CDC](#)
7. [Measles Clinical Diagnosis Fact Sheet- CDC](#)
8. [Surveillance manual chapter on measles- CDC](#)

Health Alert

Publication Date: 02/04/2026

Supporting Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities and their families to achieve greater independence, choice, and opportunity in their lives.