

CENTER FOR DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL

Dr. Robert L. Yeager Health Center
50 Sanatorium Road, Building D
Pomona, New York 10970
Phone: (845) 364-2997 Fax: (845) 364-3658



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

EDWIN J. DAY
County Executive

PATRICIA S. RUPPERT, DO, MPH, CPE, DABFM, FAAFP
Commissioner of Health

MARIA C. MOSQUERA, MD, MPH, FAAP
Medical Director

November 28, 2018

To: Rockland County Food Pantries

There are now **83 cases of confirmed measles** throughout Rockland County, *not only* in the religious community.

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) caused by a virus that is spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people (when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes). Measles is one of the most contagious viruses on earth; one measles infected person can give the virus to 18 others. In fact, 90% of unvaccinated people exposed to the virus become infected. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, up to 2 hours after that person is gone. And you can catch measles from an infected person even before they have a measles rash.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Symptoms usually appear 10-12 days after exposure but may appear as early as 7 days and as late as 21 days after exposure. Measles typically begins with:

- high fever,
- cough,
- runny nose (coryza), and
- red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis).

Then:

- Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth.
- Three to five days after symptoms begin, a rash breaks out. It usually begins as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. Small raised bumps may also appear on top of the flat red spots. The spots may become joined together as they spread from the head to the rest of the body. When the rash appears, a person's fever may go up to more than 104° Fahrenheit.
- After a few days, the fever subsides and the rash fades.

People are considered infectious from four days *before* to four days *after* the appearance of the rash.

How can I protect myself against measles?

Individuals are considered protected or immune to measles if they have had physician or provider-confirmed measles or have a lab test confirming immunity. Those born before 1957, and those who have received two doses of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine, are also considered immune,

however there is a very small chance that in this outbreak they may still get measles, but a much less severe case and much less likely to spread to others.

The best way for you, your team, and the Rockland community to protect yourselves against measles is to make sure that you are fully vaccinated with the measles vaccine (MMR). A safe and effective measles vaccine (MMR) that can prevent suffering and death has been available for more than 50 years.

Two doses of the MMR vaccine are recommended for maximum protection. One dose of the MMR vaccines can offer 93% protection from the measles. Two doses of the MMR vaccine can offer 97% protection from the measles. Typically, the first dose of MMR vaccine is given at 12-15 months of age and the second dose is given at four to six years of age (age of school entry), although individuals may also be vaccinated later in life.

Due to the measles outbreak in Rockland County, the Rockland County Department of Health also recommends the following:

- Children 6 months through 11 months of age get an MMR vaccine now. Getting an MMR vaccine now will help give them some protection against measles. They will still have to get a vaccine at 12-15 months of age and again at 4-6 years of age.
- Children 1 through 3 years of age who have already received their first MMR vaccine should get a second MMR vaccine now, as long as 28 days have passed since the first MMR vaccine was given to them. This second MMR vaccine will count for school entry.
- Any adult who has not received their first MMR vaccine yet should get their first MMR vaccine now.

There may be medical reasons not to get the MMR vaccine (such as if you are pregnant or immunosuppressed (when your body can't fight disease). Speak to your health care provider.

Where can I get the MMR vaccine?

- If you are unsure if you are immune to measles or would like to get the MMR vaccine, contact your healthcare provider.
- If you would like to get the MMR vaccine and your health care provider does not have the measles vaccine, you do not have a healthcare provider, or don't have health insurance:
 - You can contact any Rockland County federally qualified health center. They schedule appointments with sliding scale fees.
 - You can call the Rockland County Department of Health at **845-364-2497** or **845-364-2520** to schedule an appointment to get a Free MMR vaccine.
 - The Rockland County Department of Health Spring Valley Family Planning Clinic is also providing Free MMR vaccine by appointment to Family Planning patients. Family planning patients can call **845-364-2531** to schedule an appointment.

How can I get more information about measles?

You can get more information about measles by calling the New York State Department of Health toll free Measles Information Line at (888) 364-4837 or from:

<http://rocklandgov.com/departments/health/measles-information/>

Thank you,



Maria Cecilia Mosquera, MD MPH FAAP
Community Health Physician and Medical Director
Rockland County Department of Health