

May 15, 2019

Dear Childcare Administrator,

The United States is experiencing the largest number measles outbreak since 1994, now totaling over 800 cases. The majority of cases are in unvaccinated persons and nearly 75% are in children. While there are currently no confirmed measles cases in Chicago, we expect cases to occur locally in the upcoming weeks. Measles is highly contagious. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing. Also, measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed. It causes a rash all over the body and high fever. Complications can include ear infections, pneumonia, seizures, brain and nervous system infections, hospitalization and even death. Two doses of measles-containing vaccine, usually given as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), are critical to preventing the spread of infection. Infants under the age of 12 months are particularly vulnerable, since they are too young to have started the vaccine series.

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) requests your assistance in helping to avoid an outbreak at your facility. It is imperative that your facility carry out the following recommendations:

- Review immunization records of all your clients and make sure that all children are in compliance with state immunization requirements:
  - 1 dose (given on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday) for daycare and pre-K.
  - 2 doses of MMR for grades K through 12. The first dose must have been received on or after the 1st birthday and the second dose no less than 4 weeks (28 days) later.
- Encourage families to speak with their doctor about their child's vaccination status.
- CDPH can assist by training one designated staff member from your facility to assess your students' immunization records. If you are in need of assistance please contact us at 312-746-6381.

Measles in a childcare center is a serious matter. If you learn of any children with measles at your facility:

- Contact CDPH at **312-743-9000** immediately so that we can verify the diagnosis and ensure that control measures are implemented. These measures include cleaning areas in which children with suspected or confirmed measles were present, notifying parents in the center, and ensuring that unvaccinated and vulnerable children remain at home for up to 14 days.
- In accordance with public health law, if a child in your facility develops measles, all children who are not vaccinated or are not in compliance with the MMR requirements, even if they have a medical or religious exemption, must be excluded from your facility from day 7 to day 21 after the most recent child with measles was present while contagious. Specific guidance will be provided for each child by the health department.

Please also consider sharing the attached letter/parent resources in your front office. Ensuring that children are vaccinated and that proper outbreak control measures are taken is critical in preventing the spread of measles. Childcare administrators are expected to provide student contact information and vaccination records in a timely manner in the event of an exposure. CDPH consultation is essential prior to any parent communication and parents of exposed children are contacted directly by CDPH with instructions. CDPH will provide information to the public in the case of any confirmed local measles cases. Additional information may be provided to you as necessary. Thank you for your work protecting the health of all children in our community.

Sincerely,



Marielle Fricchione, MD FAAP

Medical Director, Immunization Program  
Chicago Department of Public Health



## SAMPLE GENERAL MEASLES LETTER FOR PARENTS

[DATE]

Dear Parent:

Measles is spreading across the United States and while Chicago has good vaccination coverage overall and does not currently have any cases, children who are not up to date with vaccines could be at increased risk. The majority of cases across the country are in unvaccinated persons. Measles is a very contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. It spreads through the air through coughing and sneezing. Measles starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat, and is followed by a rash that spreads all over the body. An infected person can spread measles to others even before developing symptoms—from four days before they develop the measles rash through four days afterward. Children younger than 5 years of age are at high risk of getting a serious case of measles. Children with measles may need to be hospitalized and have long term complications.

The best way to protect your children is by making sure everyone receives measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine **on time**. Children usually get the first dose of MMR at 12 to 15 months of age and the second dose at 4 to 6 years of age. This is a requirement to attend school. Delaying vaccinations increases the risk of getting sick.

A complete immunization record is required to attend daycare. Your child should be up to date with all immunizations, especially MMR. If a child in your facility develops measles, all children who have not received MMR will be excluded for up to 14 days. Please do not send your child to daycare if they are sick or if they are not vaccinated and have recently been exposed to measles.

If you are not sure if you or your family is up-to-date with vaccination, call your health care provider right away.

Please contact us with any questions at [phone number]. For more information on measles, visit:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/>

We take the health and safety of our students and staff very seriously and thank you for your cooperation and understanding. Contact [ ] with additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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### Parent Resources:

- CDC Measles Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/faqs.html>
- CDPH Get-the-Facts-Measles (English and Spanish): <https://tinyurl.com/y5frgrw>
- Measles Fact Sheet (English and Spanish): <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/measles.html>
- The Top 4 Things Parents need to know about Measles: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/parents-top4.html>
- Measles infographic: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/parent-infographic.html>