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Kentucky Health Officials Report Measles Case, Suspect Outbreak *Immunizations are Needed to Prevent Spread*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 13, 2026) – Today, Kentucky health officials announced that a case of measles with a high number of community exposures has been confirmed in Christian County. The individual was not vaccinated against measles and is believed to have been exposed through contact with an out-of-state visitor from a community with an ongoing measles outbreak. Additional unconfirmed reports of measles in Christian County have led health officials to suspect a wider outbreak in the area.

“Measles is a serious, debilitating and sometimes life-threatening disease,” said Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Dr. Steven Stack. “Fortunately, measles is almost entirely preventable for those who have been vaccinated with two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. We urge all parents and caregivers to talk to their healthcare providers about their child’s immunizations and how best to keep their families healthy.”

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory virus that can cause serious health complications, especially in young children. Measles is spread through the air where it can remain suspended for up to two hours. Early symptoms of measles begin 8 to 12 days after exposure and include high fever, cough, runny nose, and red/watery eyes. The characteristic measles rash typically appears three to five days after symptoms begin, usually on the face before spreading down to the rest of the body.

"The Christian County Health Department (CCHD) remains committed to protecting the health and safety of our residents," said CCHD Director Devin Brumfield. "CCHD staff are working

closely with the Kentucky Department for Public Health and local partners to identify potential exposures, notify those who may be at risk, and provide appropriate guidance.”

The first dose of measles vaccine is routinely administered as part of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine given to children at age 12 months through 15 months, with a second dose at age four years through six years. Together, these two doses of MMR vaccine are 97% effective against measles according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and other experts.

In 2025, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a travel advisory urging all people age one year and older traveling outside of the United States to receive two doses of MMR vaccine if they have never been vaccinated or are uncertain of their vaccination status. Infants ages 6 to 11 months traveling internationally are also recommended to receive one early dose of MMR.

“We encourage residents to review their vaccination status for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR vaccine) and to contact CCHD or their healthcare provider with potential concerns,” Brumfield said. “We will continue to share information as it comes available while respecting patient privacy.”

Immunization rates among Kentucky’s kindergartners have recently increased but are still among the lowest in the nation. Results from the most recent school immunizations survey, for the 2025-2026 school year, indicate that only 90.7% of Kentucky kindergarteners are fully vaccinated against measles, which is lower than the national average of 93% in 2024-2025. This is the first confirmed case of measles in Kentucky since January 2026, when four cases were identified in Jessamine County.

The U.S. is currently experiencing the largest measles outbreak in since it was declared eliminated in here in 2000. As of Aug. 6, the CDC had reported more than 2,465 confirmed cases of measles across the country, the highest number of cases in a single year in 35 years. Confirmed cases and outbreaks have recently been reported in Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, among other states.

For more information about measles, including a link to the Kentucky Department for Public Health’s measles dashboard which updates case counts daily, please visit the department’s measles webpage at: www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/idb/Pages/measles.aspx.

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