

Multi-state Measles Outbreak, December 2014-January 2015

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and State Health Departments are investigating a multi-state outbreak of measles associated with travel to Disneyland Resort Theme Parks (which includes Disneyland and Disney California Adventure).

About Measles

Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral illness. It begins with a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza (runny nose), conjunctivitis (pink eye), lasting 2-4 days prior to rash onset. Measles can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis, and death. Measles is transmitted by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing; infected people are contagious from 4 days before their rash starts through 4 days afterwards. After an infected person leaves a location, the virus remains viable for up to 2 hours on surfaces and in the air.

Recent Measles Outbreak

The United States is experiencing a large multi-state measles outbreak that started in California in December 2014 and has spread to six additional states (Utah, Washington, Arizona, Oregon, Colorado, Nebraska) and Mexico. From December 28, 2014 through January 21, 2015, 51 confirmed cases of measles have been reported ranging in age from 10 months to 57 years. 55% were unvaccinated, 31% had unknown vaccination status and 12% were vaccinated.

Measles was declared eliminated (i.e., interruption of year-round endemic transmission) in the United States in 2000, because of high population immunity achieved by high 2-dose measles vaccine coverage and a highly effective measles vaccine. However, measles is still endemic in many parts of the world, and outbreaks can occur in the U.S. when unvaccinated groups are exposed to imported measles virus. In 2014, nearly half of importations in the U.S. were linked to travel to the Philippines during the large measles outbreak in that country. Disney and other theme parks are international attractions, and visitors come from many parts of the world, including locations where measles is endemic. The current multi-state outbreak underscores the ongoing risk of importation of measles, the need for high measles vaccine coverage, and the importance of a prompt and appropriate public health response to measles cases and outbreaks.

For more information:

CDC. Measles—United States, January 1–May 23, 2014. *MMWR*. 2014;63:496-499

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6322a4.htm>

- CDC's Measles (Rubeola) website.

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

- CDC's Measles Vaccination website.

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccination.html>