

PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATING POTENTIAL MEASLES EXPOSURES IN ARLINGTON

12 July 2024

Dear Colleague:

On July 12, 2024, Arlington County issued a press release, "Officials Investigating Potential Measles Exposures in Arlington"¹ (Attachment 1), that informs persons may have been exposed to a person infected with measles if they were at the following location at the specified date and times:

- Harris Teeter: 624B N Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22203 between 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Monday, July 1, 2024

This communication provides the following information that you and your staff should review:

- **Officials Investigating Potential Measles Exposures in Arlington¹** (Attachment 1)
- **VDH Measles Fact Sheet²** (Attachment 2)
- **What To Do If You Suspect Measles in A Patient Already in Your Office**
- **How To Protect Your Patients and Your Office from Possible Measles Exposures Going Forward**

*****Maintain a high index of suspicion for measles in patients with exposures in the specific locations at the dates and times noted above (Attachment 1).*****

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT MEASLES IN A PATIENT
ALREADY IN YOUR OFFICE:**

- Do not allow such patients to remain in your waiting area. Immediately provide a surgical mask to the patient. Place the masked person in a private room with negative pressure if available, or a room with a closed door. **NOTE: Any shared airspace (including the exam room and waiting area) that has been occupied by the patient should not be used for the next 2 hours.**
- Use standard and airborne precautions.
- Only allow staff with documented evidence of measles immunity to work with the patient.
- Call Arlington County Public Health Division (ACPHD) staff immediately to report your suspicion and for guidance on appropriate testing and control measures. You can reach ACPHD staff 24/7 to report suspect cases of measles and/or to discuss these recommendations and other questions you may have about measles:

MEASLES 101 (See Attachment 2. VDH Measles Factsheet)

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease spread through breathing, coughing, sneezing, and contact with aerosolized droplets or secretions from the nose, mouth, and throat of an infected person.

Measles is characterized by fever >101°F, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.

After 3-7 days of illness, a maculopapular rash begins on the face, generalizing to the rest of the body.

NOTE: Patients with measles are contagious 4 days prior to rash onset until 4 days after.

¹ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/Newsroom/Articles/2024/Health-Officials-Investigating-Potential-Measles-Exposures-in-Arlington>

² <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/epidemiology-fact-sheets/measles-rubeola>

- Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. call 703-228-5200, option #1.
- Nights and weekends, call 703-558-2222 and ask for the Public Health Duty Officer.

NOTE: You may be asked to collect up to three specimens to confirm measles: 1) serum, 2) a nasopharyngeal swab, and 3) an oropharyngeal swab.

- For patients needing transport by EMS from your office to the hospital:
 - Notify EMS that you suspect measles, so EMS personnel can take appropriate precautions before arriving at your office to protect themselves from exposure during transport.
 - Notify the receiving hospital that you suspect measles, so hospital personnel can take appropriate precautions to protect themselves when they receive the patient from EMS and protect the other patients from exposure by directing the masked patient to an appropriate exam room.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PATIENTS AND YOUR OFFICE FROM POSSIBLE MEASLES EXPOSURES GOING FORWARD:

- Ensure that all eligible patients are adequately vaccinated against measles.
- Ensure all office staff, from direct care to administrative staff, have evidence of immunity to measles: 1) documentation of two doses of measles vaccine or 2) documentation of laboratory evidence of immunity.
- Proactively ask your patients NOT to walk in unannounced when they have fever and rash. Advise them to report fever and rash symptoms when they call to request an appointment.
- Instruct staff to ask patients about fever and rash symptoms when they request an appointment.
- Schedule appointments for patients with suspected measles at the end of the day or when other patients are not present and will not arrive within 2 hours of the scheduled visit for the suspected measles patient.

For additional information on measles, visit the CDC Measles website (www.cdc.gov/measles).

Thank you for all you do to control and prevent the spread of communicable diseases in our community.

Sincerely,



Reuben K. Varghese, MD, MPH
Health Director & Director, Public Health Division

ATTACHMENT 1: Arlington County Press Release (July 12, 2024): Officials Investigating Potential Measles Exposures in Arlington.

ATTACHMENT 2: VDH Measles Fact Sheet (September 2021).



Officials Investigating Potential Measles Exposures in Arlington

Arlington County VA Government sent this bulletin at 07/12/2024 06:50 PM EDT

Officials Investigating Potential Measles Exposures in Arlington

The Arlington County Public Health Division (ACPHD) was notified of a confirmed case of measles in a person who visited a grocery store in Arlington while contagious. The case is a resident of another state. Out of an abundance of caution, ACPHD is informing people who were at this location that they may have been exposed.

Listed below are the date, times, and location of the potential exposure site associated with this case of measles:

- Harris Teeter: 624B N Glebe Rd, Arlington, VA 22203, between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m., on Mon., July 1, 2024

[Measles](#) is a highly contagious illness that can spread easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. [Measles symptoms](#) usually appear in two stages.

In the first stage, most people have a fever of greater than 101 degrees, runny nose, watery red eyes, and a cough. These symptoms usually start 7 to 14 days after being exposed. The second stage starts 3 to 5 days after symptoms start, when a rash begins to appear on the face and spread to the rest of the body. People with measles are contagious from 4 days before the rash appears through 4 days after the rash appeared.

What should you do if you were at one of the above locations on the day and time specified?

- If you have never received a measles containing vaccine (either the measles, mumps and rubella [MMR] vaccine or a measles only vaccine which is available in other countries), you may be at risk of developing measles. Anyone who was exposed and is at risk of developing measles should watch for symptoms until July 22, 2024. **If you notice the symptoms of measles, immediately isolate yourself by staying home and away from others.** Contact your healthcare provider right away. **Call ahead before going to your healthcare provider's office or the emergency room** to notify them that you may have been exposed to measles and ask them to call the health department. This will help protect other patients and staff.
- If you have received two doses of a measles containing vaccine, or were born before 1957, you are protected and do not need to take any action.
- If you have received only one dose of a measles containing vaccine, you are very likely to be protected and your risk of being infected with measles from any of these exposures is very low. However, to achieve complete immunity, contact your healthcare provider about getting a second vaccine dose.
- If you have an immunocompromising condition, please consult with your healthcare provider if you have questions or develop symptoms.

ATTACHMENT 1.

Measles is preventable through a safe and effective MMR vaccine. Two doses of the vaccine are given to provide lifetime protection. Virginia has high measles vaccination rates, with approximately 95% of kindergarteners fully vaccinated against measles. However, infants younger than 12 months of age are too young to be vaccinated. These infants, and others who are not vaccinated, are very susceptible to infection if they are exposed to someone with measles.

If you or your child have not yet been vaccinated, call the [Arlington County Public Health Division](#) or your healthcare provider to get the first of two doses as soon as possible. To check your immunization status, call your healthcare provider or request records from the [VDH Immunization Record Request Form](#).

Healthcare providers should maintain an increased index of suspicion for measles in clinically compatible cases at all times, especially if patients were recently exposed. Measles is an immediately reportable disease. Contact the [local health department](#) right away to report any suspected cases and arrange for public health testing.

If you have any questions about this potential exposure, please contact the Arlington County Public Health's Communicable Disease Programs at 703-228-5657.

Communicable Disease Programs

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[View this release in our newsroom](#)

Measles (rubeola) Fact Sheet

What is measles?

Measles is a serious illness caused by the measles virus. It is spread very easily from person to person and can cause outbreaks of illness. Before the vaccine became available, most people contracted measles during childhood. Now the disease is rare in the United States, but it is still common in many countries.

Who gets measles?

Although measles is considered a childhood disease, people of any age can get it. In the United States, most cases are in unvaccinated infants, children, and teens. Adults at increased risk include college students, international travelers, and health care personnel.

How is measles spread?

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases. The measles virus is spread through the air or by direct contact with nose or throat discharges from someone who is infected. The measles virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after a person with measles has occupied the area.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles symptoms usually appear in two stages. In the first stage, most people have a fever, runny nose, redness of the eyes, and cough. The second stage begins around days 3-7 when a red blotchy rash begins to appear on the face and spreads over the entire body. The rash generally lasts 5-6 days. Small white spots, called Koplik spots, also may be seen on the gums and inside of the cheeks.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms may begin within 7-21 days after exposure with an average of 10 days after exposure. The rash usually appears within 14 days of exposure.

What is the treatment for measles?

Treatment focuses on relief of symptoms as the body fights the virus. This may include fluids, medications to control fever or pain, antibiotics to treat secondary infections from bacteria, and vitamin A supplements.

How can measles be prevented?

Vaccinating as many children as possible is the best way to prevent measles cases and outbreaks. Two doses of measles vaccine are recommended for all children. The first dose, as part of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, should be given at 12-15 months of age and the second

dose before a child enters kindergarten (4-6 years of age). There are additional recommendations for adults and those who are traveling outside of the United States, including infants as young as 6 months of age.

How long can an infected person carry measles?

A person can spread the measles virus from just before the onset of the fever (usually four days before rash onset) to about four days after the appearance of the rash. Immunocompromised patients may spread the virus for the duration of their illness.

What are the complications associated with measles?

Middle ear infections, pneumonia, croup, and diarrhea commonly occur in young children. Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) can occur in a small percentage of cases. Death due to measles is very rare in the United States and occurs in 1-3 of every 1,000 cases. Measles is more severe in children younger than 5 years and adults older than 20 years of age.

Can a person who had measles get it again?

No. Persons who have had measles do not get it again.

How can I get more information about measles?

- If you have concerns about measles, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at the [VDH Local Health Districts page](#).
- Visit the [VDH measles website](#).
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [the CDC page on measles](#).

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