



February 26, 2025

Navajo Department of Health
Public Health Advisory Notice
Measles

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center, is monitoring measles cases reported off the Navajo Nation in neighboring states and border towns and has issued a public health advisory notice to inform the public.

The New Mexico Department of Health reports nine Lea County, NM residents tested positive for measles (800+ contacts and none are hospitalized) as of Thursday, February 25, 2025. The cases border Texas's Gaines County, where cases have jumped from 2 to 124 cases in two weeks (18 hospitalized, 1 death, and 80% of the cases are less 18 years of age). Currently, there are no measles cases reported in Arizona, Utah and Colorado.

General Information:

Measles can be serious in all age groups. Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is highly contagious that if one person has it, up to 9 out of 10 people around them will also become infected if they are unvaccinated.

Measles starts with a fever. Soon after, it causes a cough, runny nose, and red eyes. Then a rash of tiny, red spots breaks out. It starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body. The rash can last for a week, and coughing can last for 10 days. Measles can cause serious health complications, such as pneumonia or encephalitis, and even death.

Prevention: Vaccination Matters

- The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is available at all IHS/638 facilities on the Navajo Nation.
- The MMR vaccine works very well – making it far less likely for you to get measles than someone unvaccinated with no immunity. Those born before 1957 are already immune.
- Vaccination provides strong protection; however, if you are vaccinated and develop symptoms after exposure, consult a healthcare provider. Most adults vaccinated as children are presumed to be immune.
- Children should receive two doses: one each at 12 months and four years old.

Symptoms and risks:

- Symptoms can appear up to 21 days after exposure.
- Symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes, followed by a red spotted rash that usually starts on the head or face and spreads downward across the body.
- Complications can include diarrhea, ear infections, and pneumonia.
- About 1 in 5 unvaccinated people in the United States who get measles is hospitalized.

In the event you experience fever, cough, runny nose, rash, or any other symptoms of measles:

- Please self-isolate, stay away from others and contact your healthcare provider by phone and let them know you are concerned you may have measles. They will let you know when to visit their office so as not to expose others in the waiting area.

Ask your doctor if you and your family have received all recommended doses of MMR for best protection against measles.

For more information regarding measles, please call the Navajo Department of Health at 928-871-6350 or contact your doctor.