



Measles in California

As of April 11, 2025, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been notified of [607 confirmed U.S. cases of measles](#), six outbreaks, with the largest outbreak in **Texas and New Mexico** accounting for more than 90% of cases. [In California, there are 9 confirmed measles cases](#) to date, according to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). CDC issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) health advisory about this expanding measles outbreak on March 7, 2025. For more information including guidance about the upcoming travel season, review the [CDC health advisory through this link](#).

Sonoma County clinicians should maintain a high index of suspicion to quickly identify potential measles cases.

BACKGROUND:

Measles is extremely contagious. Symptom onset begins with fever, cough, coryza (runny nose), and conjunctivitis (pink eye), followed by a rash 2–4 days later starting on the face and spreads downward on the body. Infected individuals are contagious from 4 days before the rash appears and remain infectious 4 days thereafter.

The virus is transmitted by direct contact with infectious droplets or by airborne spread when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Droplets can remain infectious in the air and on surfaces for up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves an area.

Patients with prodromal symptoms can be very ill and often visit healthcare facilities at least 2 or 3 times before rash onset. **A self-reported history of measles immunization or infection does not rule out the possibility of measles.** Clinicians should confirm vaccination status. All staff should be fully vaccinated.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS:

1. **If you have a patient suspected of measles at your clinic, keep the patient in a quarantined exam room and immediately call Sonoma County Disease Control Program at 707-565-4568.**
 - If it is after 5:00pm or weekends, call Sonoma County Dispatch at 707-568-5992.
 - Refer to **“Guidance for Suspected Measles at your office”** on page three of this letter.
2. Patients calling the clinic with complaint of rash and fever should be instructed to call the desk when they arrive outside the clinic and before entering the building. **Consider/suspect measles** in patients with fever, including subjective (tactile), and a **maculopapular rash that starts on the head and descends**. Patients with measles typically have a **high fever ($\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$ or 38.3°C)**.

Assess patient history for:

- ✓ Measles vaccination status
- ✓ Exposure to a known measles case



- ✓ Travel history, up to three weeks prior to having symptoms:
 - Travel to **North America and areas with measles cases or outbreaks**
 - History of transits through the US and international airport
 - History of interaction with foreign visitors
 - History of visiting a popular U.S. tourist attraction including theme parks

3. **Advise patients with suspected measles to stay home and avoid visitors until at least four days after rash appears and/or until cleared by the Sonoma County Disease Control Program to resume normal activities.**

4. Patients with suspected measles should go home by private vehicle and should only be accompanied by someone immune to measles. They should NOT use public transportation or ride-sharing services (e.g. Uber, Lyft).

PREPARE YOUR FACILITY FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF MEASLES:

1. **Confirm immunity of contacts and health care staff with unknown vaccination status by ordering **Measles IgG only**.**

- DO NOT order measles IgM testing for asymptomatic individuals, as there is a substantial possibility of a false positive IgM result.
- *Confirm staff immunity now to avoid staff exclusion from work in the event of an exposure.*
- CDC recommends 2 doses of MMR for healthcare workers without evidence of immunity.

2. **Sick-waiting room:** If possible, set up a sick-waiting room with clear signage at entrances and exits that directs patients with fever and rash to notify staff of their symptoms.

- Train staff to immediately implement airborne precautions if measles is suspected.
- Mask and isolate the patient in an airborne isolation room.
- Do not re-use the exam room for two hours after the patient has left the room.
- If referring the patient to other healthcare facilities, ensure that airborne precautions are in place.
- Only staff immune to measles should be taking care of suspected measles cases. Staff should use N-95 respirators.
- For more complete infection control guidance in healthcare settings, go to the [CDPH Measles Exposure Quicksheet](#).

3. **The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is effective.** Two doses provide 97% protection against measles. Educate and advocate for MMR **vaccination for unvaccinated children and adults including booster for those who have not completed the MMR vaccine series** according to [CDC Vaccines and Immunizations Schedules](#).



Guidance for Suspected Measles at your office:

If you have patients suspected of having measles at your clinic, isolate them in a quarantined exam room and promptly contact the Sonoma County Disease Control Program at (707) 565-4568. After 5:00pm or on weekends, call Sonoma County Dispatch at (707) 568-5992.

For suspected measles patients at your office:

Consult with the Sonoma County Disease Control Program. You will receive instructions on the appropriate measles test order and specimen collection, which will include the following:

- **Throat/Oropharyngeal (OP) Swab:**
 - Use a sterile synthetic swab (e.g., Dacron),
 - Vigorously swab tonsillar areas
 - Place swab into liquid viral or universal transport media.
 - Do not use bacterial transport media.
- **Urine Sample for PCR testing:**
 - Collect 10-50 ml of urine in a sterile urine specimen container
 - Collect urine at the beginning of the stream. The first morning void is ideal.

Instruction for Specimen Collection and Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory Send-out:

- **Collect specimens while the patient is at your facility**, to prevent delays in confirmation and minimizing the potential for additional healthcare visits or exposures.
- **HOLD all specimens for testing by the Sonoma County Public Health Lab for expedited analysis and results**, as using a commercial laboratory may cause delays.
- **Sonoma County will arrange for the transport of specimen** from your office to the Public Health Laboratory.

For supportive treatment of diagnosed Measles cases and clinical management, please refer to the [CDC Clinical Overview of Measles](#).