



## **Resist Hate**

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# **Measles Outbreak in the United States: Fact Sheet**

## **What is measles?**

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can linger in the air for up to two hours.

## **Why is measles dangerous?**

Measles can cause pneumonia, brain swelling, hearing loss, and in rare cases, death. Young children and immunocompromised people are most at risk.

## **What's happening right now?**

The U.S. is experiencing a resurgence of measles. South Carolina alone has reported more than 870 cases, mostly among unvaccinated children and teens.

## **Why are outbreaks increasing?**

Lower vaccination rates in some communities have created immunity gaps, allowing measles to spread rapidly.

## **How contagious is measles?**

Measles is one of the most contagious viruses known. Up to 90% of unvaccinated people exposed will become infected.

## **How can measles be prevented?**

The MMR vaccine is safe and highly effective. Two doses provide about 97% protection.

## **What should you do?**

- Check vaccination records
- Get vaccinated if needed
- Contact a healthcare provider after exposure
- Watch for symptoms like fever, cough, red eyes, and rash

**Why this matters**

Measles outbreaks put vulnerable people at risk and strain public health systems. Vaccination protects individuals and communities.

**Sources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Measles Overview
CIDRAP – University of Minnesota: South Carolina Measles Outbreak Reporting
World Health Organization (WHO) – Measles Fact Sheets
State and local public health department reports