



1715 Lansing Avenue
Jackson, MI 49202
Phone: 517-788-4420
Fax: 517-788-4373
www.mijackson.org/HD



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CONTACT: Kristin Pluta, Health Officer; kpluta@mijackson.org

Potential Exposure to Measles in Jackson County

JACKSON COUNTY, MI – The Jackson County Health Department (JCHD) is alerting the public to the possibility of a measles exposure on March 10, 2024 at Henry Ford Jackson Emergency Department. The case is related to a case in Washtenaw County. The Jackson County Health Department is working closely with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Henry Ford Jackson and Washtenaw County Health Department to investigate the situation and prevent additional cases. The individual is following all isolation protocols.

Because the measles virus can stay in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves the area, individuals who were present at the following may have been exposed:

Henry Ford Jackson Hospital Emergency Department, 205 N. East Ave., Jackson MI 49201 on March 10, 2024 between 9:30 am and 1 pm.

Since more than 72 hours have passed, it is too late for immediate vaccination to prevent infection.

Contact your health care provider, pharmacy or the Jackson County Health Department at 517-768-1664 for vaccination and guidance. In addition, anyone potentially exposed should monitor themselves for symptoms for 21 days. If symptoms develop, such as fever, respiratory symptoms, or rash, call ahead before visiting a doctor, urgent care, or emergency room so they can take precautions to avoid exposing others.

Measles is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable disease that is spread by direct person-to-person contact, and through the air. Measles is so contagious that ninety percent of unvaccinated people who are exposed to measles will become infected. Infected people can spread measles before noticing symptoms, including from four days before through four days after the rash appears.

Measles can lead to serious complications including hospitalization and long-term illness, and death. About one in five people who get measles will be hospitalized. One in 20 children who contract measles will develop pneumonia and up to three children who contract measles in 1,000 will die. Symptoms of measles usually begin 7-14 days after exposure, but can appear up to 21 days after exposure and may include:

- High fever (may spike to over 104°F).
- Cough.
- Runny nose.
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis).
- Tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums and roof of the mouth (Koplik Spots) two to three days after symptoms begin.
- A rash that is red, raised, blotchy; usually starts on face, spreads to trunk, arms and legs three to five days after symptoms begin.

Working together to create and promote a healthy community through disease prevention and control, health education, environmental protection, and emergency preparedness.

If symptoms develop, call your doctor, urgent care, or hospital before seeking treatment so steps can be taken to prevent exposure to other individuals.

Cases are increasing across the U.S. and outbreaks are occurring nationally and globally. In addition to recent Michigan cases, over 40 measles cases have been reported 15 other states so far in 2024.

Measles Vaccine

The measles vaccine is highly effective, very safe and provides long-lasting protection. A single dose of measles vaccine is about 93% effective at preventing measles, while two doses are about 97% effective. It is also effective if used within 72 hours of measles exposure to prevent illness. However, some individuals with weakened immune systems may not be eligible to receive this vaccine. Getting vaccinated not only protects the individual receiving the vaccine but can also protect vulnerable individuals in our communities from being exposed to this illness.

With the risk for community spread, anyone not fully vaccinated against measles is encouraged to do so as soon as possible. To verify their vaccination status, residents are encouraged to contact their health care provider or the Jackson County Health Department.

Across the United States and in Michigan, routine immunization coverage has dropped. Statewide, vaccine coverage for the MMR (two doses) vaccine for children ages 4 to 6 years old has decreased from 89.4% in 2017 to 83.9% in 2023. For children ages 19 through 35 months of age, MMR vaccine coverage decreased from 84.7% in April 2020 to 83.6% in December 2023.

Vaccination is available from health care providers, pharmacies and the Jackson County Health Department. Children eligible for the Vaccines for Children program may receive the vaccine from a provider enrolled in that program at no cost. To learn more about measles resources and vaccines in Jackson County, please visit the Jackson County Health Department website at: <https://www.mijackson.org/276/Health-Department>