

Measles Q&A with Fresno County health officials



A single-dose vial of the measles-mumps-rubella virus vaccine live

DAMIAN DOVARGANES — Associated Press

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 - Check your vaccination status and discuss vaccinations with your primary health care provider.
 - Anyone who has had the measles before is immune.
 - Adults born in or after 1957 should receive two measles shots separated by at least 28 days.
 - Preschool and school-age children should be given two measles doses. Typically, the first dose is given at 12-15 months of age. The second is given at 4 to 6 years of age. Children as young as 6 months can receive a dose; this dose does not count in the usual two-dose requirement and the child will still need two doses, the first usually given at 12 months and the second dose between 3 and 5 years of age.

Fresno County health officials said Monday they have received many telephone calls from concerned Fresno-area residents since [a report last Wednesday](#) that a visitor to Fresno had measles and may have exposed people to the illness.

In response to inquiries, the department provided answers to several questions about measles and the potential for exposure in Fresno.

First, to recap:

- A man from a county outside the central San Joaquin Valley was confirmed to have measles after a visit to Fresno.
- The man was on the third and fourth floors in the labor and delivery area at Community Regional Medical Center in downtown Fresno on two occasions between Jan. 22 and Jan. 25.
- He also visited WinCo Foods at Kings Canyon Road and Peach Avenue in southeast Fresno sometime between 6:30-9:30 p.m. on Jan. 25 and was at Fashion Fair Mall inside the Build a Bear and Disney stores from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. that same day.
- California health officials [said Monday](#) they have confirmed 92 cases statewide.

Fresno County Department of Public Health Q&A

Question: What is the Fresno County Department of Public Health doing to respond to the fact that the visitor confirmed with measles may have exposed Fresno County residents to the disease?

Answer: The department continues to monitor for suspect cases. The department is working closely with health care/medical providers to prepare for possibility of a suspected measles case.

Are there more cases of measles in Fresno County?

The Fresno County Department of Public Health has not received a report of any new cases of measles in this county.

Has the health department investigative team identified “at-risk” patients at Community Regional Medical Center?

The Department of Public Health is working closely with Community Regional to identify patients who may have been exposed to the measles virus. While this is not an exact process, the focus is on patients with the highest potential for contact with the infected individual and highest potential for complications. Currently, we are logging all potential exposures for follow-up. Those at highest risk are being monitored daily for possible early signs and symptoms of measles.

Are there infant cases due to exposure in labor and delivery (third and fourth floors) at Community Regional?

No additional suspected or confirmed cases of measles in this county have been identified at this time.

Is this a new strain of measles or does the measles vaccination provide protection?

This is not a new strain. The outer covering of the measles virus is stable. The current measles vaccine protects against this outer covering. If any mutations occur in the measles virus, this actually makes it weaker. This measles strain is the same virus that impacted the United States almost 50 years ago. The virus is very stable and is not prone to mutation.

How can a person determine whether or not he or she has been vaccinated?

The only way to be absolutely certain about what vaccinations a person has received is to gather medical records — from childhood, from high school and from adulthood. Contact the current and former doctors and request immunization records. The current health care provider can help determine full or up-to-date vaccination status.

Has the vaccination status been determined for the visitor to Fresno County who has measles?

The department has not received confirmation of the infected person's vaccination status.

What are the signs and symptoms of measles and what should a resident do if any of these symptoms occur?

The symptoms of measles generally appear about seven to 14 days after a person is infected. Measles typically begins with high fever (103-105 degrees), cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes.

Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth. Three to five days after symptoms begin, a rash breaks out. It usually begins as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. Small raised bumps may also appear on top of the flat red spots. The spots may become joined together as they spread from the head to the rest of the body. When the rash appears, a person's fever may spike to more than 104 degrees.

What should someone who suspects they have measles do?

Fresno County residents who show any signs of measles should stay at home and verify their immunization status. Contact should then be made with their health care provider by telephone for instructions. Do not arrive unannounced at a health care provider office or at a hospital emergency room. If instructed by a medical professional to come to an office, clinic, or hospital, it is important to travel by personal car. Do not use public transportation.

What should parents of children under 12 months do?

It is always recommended that newborns avoid exposure to large crowded areas, particularly during flu season.

If a child may have been in contact with a measles case or if a child shows signs or symptoms of measles, parents should notify their physician by telephone immediately. Do not arrive unannounced at a health care provider office or at a hospital emergency room. If a child is 6 months to 11 months of age and is otherwise healthy, it may be possible to receive the measles vaccination earlier than the usual 12 months of age. Residents should discuss this option with the child's primary health care/medical provider.

People can call the Measles Information Line if they have questions about measles, vaccination and prevention. The department takes calls at (559) 600-7193.

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