

NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY **Measles Virus Detected in Wastewater in Roswell, NM**

June 10, 2025

Background

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) has been monitoring wastewater for measles virus in cooperating communities since the middle of March 2025. A wastewater sample collected on June 3rd from the City of Roswell in Chaves County detected wild-type measles virus. This comes at a time when no active measles infections have been reported in the county and alerts us to maximize protection and awareness for measles in the county. This HAN is providing notice to the medical community in advance of a public press release.

Vaccination with two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine remains the best protection against measles. NMDOH measles updates, including the times and locations of measles vaccine clinics, and press releases regarding measles exposures to large public settings, can be found on our website <http://measles.doh.nm.gov/>

Healthcare providers should remain vigilant for febrile rash in unvaccinated or under-vaccinated patients of any age, especially those with recent travel to an outbreak area or exposure to known cases. It is critically important for patients with suspected measles to be promptly recognized, isolated, **reported to 1-833-796-8773**, and tested to prevent further spread.

Wastewater Surveillance for Measles

- The NMDOH is currently monitoring for measles in wastewater collected at 11 wastewater treatment plants across the state, representing approximately two-thirds of New Mexico's sewerage population. A weekly sample is collected from each site and shipped to the Rice University Stadler Lab (part of the City of Houston Wastewater Surveillance Program) to analyze gene markers unique to the circulating measles strain. New Mexico sites include Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Albuquerque-Bernalillo County, Roswell, Deming, Carlsbad, Portales, Las Cruces, and Dona Ana County's Rincon, Chaparral, and South Central wastewater treatment plants.
- Samples are collected at each facility and tested weekly for both the wild-type virus and the vaccine strain.
- A transient signal was seen in Rio Rancho wastewater prior to first cases appearing in Sandoval County.
- Wastewater surveillance cannot tell us the precise timing of infections, the location, or the number of people infected. In the absence of a known infection, this signal tells us that there was at least one unidentified measles infection in the area.

Management of suspect cases

- If measles is suspected, **immediately notify NMDOH by calling 1-833-SWNURSE, option 4 (1-833-796-8773) for further guidance.**
- Testing of febrile people **without a rash is not recommended** and may lead to false negative results. The PCR test is unlikely to detect measles virus until the onset of rash.
- Patients with a rash only and no fever or prodrome of cough, coryza or conjunctivitis should be evaluated for an alternative diagnosis.
- There is **no need to test asymptomatic contacts**
- [Obtain a throat swab or nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport medium for PCR testing](#) at the State Public Health Laboratory; serology is not needed.
- Patients suspected of having measles should be **instructed to isolate** themselves at home pending test results.

Measles is characterized by a prodrome of fever, malaise, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis, followed by a maculopapular rash. The rash begins on the head and spreads down the body, and usually appears about 14 days after exposure, but ranges from 7-21 days after exposure. A person with measles is contagious from 4 days before the rash begins through 4 days after it appears. Measles is extremely contagious, and **NMDOH recommends that patients with suspected measles (fever and rash at triage) not be allowed in the waiting room with others.** Preferably patients are initially evaluated outside the clinic, e.g., in the car or as the last patient of the day. If measles is suspected, the patient should wear a mask and immediately be isolated in a negative-pressure room or a private room with a closed door. Any room occupied by a suspected measles patient should not be used for two hours after the patient leaves, due to measles virus remaining suspended in the air during that time.

Additional Resources:

[New Mexico Department of Health Measles Updates](#)

For more information about measles, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html> or call the NMDOH Center for Health Protection at **1-833-SWNURSE** (1-833-796-8773).

Vaccine communication resources can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/resources/index.html>.

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

Please Note that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each

year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **“New Mexico Health Alert Network”** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.