

This document provides guidance for colleges, universities, and other higher educational settings on precautionary measures to take before a case of measles occurs, as well as steps to follow if a case is confirmed in this setting. Measles is an extremely contagious virus, spreading to 9 out of 10 non-immune people who are exposed. It can lead to hospitalization and complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling around the brain), and even death. Complications are more common in children aged <5 years, adults aged >20 years, and people who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems. A single measles case on a college or university campus can lead to significant spread, absenteeism, and disruption for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

New Mexico Regulations

Per the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) Section 7.4.3, any suspected case of measles, regardless of lab confirmation, must be immediately reported to the New Mexico Department of Health by “all physicians, laboratories, health care professionals, and other persons having knowledge of [the disease].”

Proactive actions for higher educational settings to take:

Develop a response plan and identify team members.

- Identify responsible personnel and their back-ups from health services, housing, security, communications, food services, academic affairs, and legal counsel.
 - If your campus offers healthcare services that could include evaluating patients with suspected measles, refer to the following guidance:
 - [NMDOH Infection Control for Measles](#)
 - [Specimen Collection for Measles PCR](#)
 - [Evaluating a Suspect Measles Patient Presenting with Rash](#)
 - If your campus offers childcare, refer to the [NMDOH Guidance for Schools and Childcare](#).

Identify students, faculty, and staff who do not have documentation of measles immunity.

If your facility does not maintain immunization records for students, faculty, or staff, recommend that those individuals have their evidence of measles immunity readily available.

- If a susceptible individual is exposed to measles, they will need to stay home and away from public settings through 21 days after exposure, unless they can show written evidence of immunity. Having this documentation readily available will prevent unnecessary absences.
- If the individual was vaccinated in New Mexico, they may be able to find their records by visiting the [VaxView](#) portal, calling **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773)**, or texting **NMDOH (66364)**.

Presumptive Evidence of Immunity to Measles

- Written documentation of receiving two doses of MMR (measles mumps-rubella) vaccine administered at least 28 days apart.
- Laboratory evidence of immunity (such as a positive IgG titer for measles antibody).
- Birth before 1957.
- Previous laboratory confirmation of disease.

Communicate with all students, faculty, and staff, reminding them of immunization recommendations.

- Reach out proactively to students, faculty, and staff, to recommend checking their immunization status and getting caught up on MMR vaccination if they are behind.
 - All students attending post-high school education (e.g., college, trade school), who do not have a medical contraindication, are recommended to have two doses of MMR vaccine, given at least 28 days apart.
 - One dose of MMR vaccine is 93% effective at preventing measles, and two doses are 97% effective. If a vaccinated person is exposed to measles, they do not have to quarantine.
- If your facility offers student health services and you are able to vaccinate, communicate vaccine availability to students and staff.
- Identify a location on campus where a vaccination clinic could be held in the event of a large number of measles exposures.

- Individuals seeking vaccine can check with their primary care provider or pharmacy, or call **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773)** or text **NMDOH (66364)** for help finding MMR vaccines or scheduling an appointment.

Develop isolation plans for students that have signs or symptoms of measles, and quarantine plans for non-immune students exposed to measles.

- A person in isolation or quarantine must stay at home, away from others, and away from all public places, including classes, extracurriculars, work, and social activities.
 - **Isolation:** a person who has measles is contagious from 4 days before, through 4 days after the rash appears.
 - **Quarantine:** a person exposed to measles who has no evidence of immunity, and does not receive MMR vaccine within 72 hours of initial exposure, must quarantine through day 21 after last exposure.
- Students in isolation or quarantine should be housed in a private room with a separate bathroom. Identify potential housing accommodations for students in isolation or quarantine before an outbreak occurs.
 - If a student chooses to isolate or quarantine at home off-campus, they must not use public transportation to get there, and anyone transporting the individual must be immune to measles. The student should wear a face mask while in transit, or use tissues to cover their nose and mouth while coughing if a face mask is not available.
- Plan for meals and other necessities that will need to be provided. Only staff with evidence of immunity to measles should deliver meals or other supplies.
- Determine how to support affected students academically, such as offering online or make-up coursework.
- Staff should communicate with affected students on a regular basis to assess their well-being (and for those in quarantine, the development of new symptoms).
- Standard environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are adequate for measles virus.
 - Use an EPA-registered healthcare disinfectant per manufacturer's instructions.
 - Wash dishes and laundry in hot water using regular detergents and soaps.
 - Dispose of trash from the student following regular workflows. No special handling is necessary.
 - If cleaning a room that a person with measles has vacated, wait at least two hours before entering the room to avoid exposure to measles virus hanging in the air.

Take respiratory disease prevention measures.

- Promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Encourage frequent handwashing. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Cover Your Cough signage available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu-resources/php/resources/cover-your-cough-health-care-poster.html>.

Immediate actions to take if an individual on campus has measles:

Quick actions can prevent further spread of measles to others on campus and in the community.

Contact NMDOH.

- Immediately contact the NMDOH at **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773)**. All suspected or confirmed cases of measles are required to be reported immediately, so NMDOH can confirm the diagnosis and ensure proper control measures are implemented to protect the community. This number is available 24/7/365.

Isolate students who tested positive for measles. Suspected cases pending laboratory results should also isolate.

- People experiencing symptoms consistent with measles should immediately isolate in a private area until they can seek health care. The person should notify the healthcare facility before arrival so that staff can take precautions to limit exposure to other patients.

If your facility has a student health center:

- For patients presenting for measles testing only, consider collecting specimens in a parking lot or other outdoor area.
- Patients needing further evaluation inside the student health center should wear a mask if it can be tolerated. The patient should be immediately escorted to a private room with a closed door, ideally through an entrance that does not require traveling through the waiting room or other common areas.
 - No one who is lacking evidence of measles immunity should be allowed to enter the room while the patient is present or in the two hours after the patient leaves.

Identify susceptible exposed contacts.

- NMDOH will work closely with your facility to contact individuals who may have been exposed to measles. Anyone who used the same common areas (hallways, cafeterias, classrooms,

residence hall common spaces, etc.) at the same time as the case, or in the two hours after the case left a location, should consider themselves exposed.

- Use the [Post-Exposure Prophylaxis \(PEP\) table](#) to determine who is eligible for post-exposure vaccine, quarantine, or symptom-monitoring.

Communicate with students, faculty, and staff.

- If a case of measles is confirmed, NMDOH will announce the locations, dates, and times that members of the public could have been exposed to measles in a press release.
 - NMDOH will never share the identity of the person(s) with measles in these announcements.
- The “Template Measles Notification Letter” (below) can be modified and shared by your facility.

Additional Resources:

For questions related to quarantine and isolation requirements, case reporting, exposures, or contact investigation, please reach out to the New Mexico Department of Health at **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773)**.

NMDOH Measles Guidance, Updates, and Infographics: <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/erd/ideb/mog/>

Call Before Entering Signage: <https://www.nmhealth.org/publication/view/marketing/9221/>

Clinical Overview of Measles: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html>

United Educators: Prepare for a Measles Outbreak: <https://www.ue.org/risk-management/health-and-well-being/prepare-for-a-measles-outbreak/>

Template Measles Notification Letter: See next page

***** **Template Measles Notification Letter below** *****

Date: ___/___/2026

Dear Students, Staff, and Faculty of _____,

This letter is to notify you that a person with measles was present on campus on the following date(s):

- [Building/Location] [date 1] [time arrived – 2 hours after time of departure]
- [Building/Location] [date 2] [time arrived – 2 hours after time of departure, etc.]

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads through airborne and respiratory droplets. The virus can remain in the air for up to 2 hours after a person with measles leaves the room. People who have not had measles or who have not received the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine are at high risk of developing measles after being exposed. About 90% of people who are not protected against measles and are exposed to the virus will get infected. Children younger than 5 years old, adults older than 20 years old, and people who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems are at higher risk of complications.

What should you do?

_____, in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Health, strongly encourages you to review your vaccination status. Children usually receive a dose of the MMR vaccine at 12-15 months and another dose at 4-6 years of age. Most people who have had 2 doses of MMR vaccine are protected from measles. Talk to your healthcare provider if you are unsure of your vaccination status, if you have only had 1 dose of the MMR vaccine, or if you have not received the MMR vaccine.

Protection provided by the measles vaccine is usually permanent. However, about 3 in 100 people who have received two doses of MMR vaccine will still get measles if exposed to the virus. Therefore, we want to provide you with information about measles, and the signs and symptoms to look for. If you or anyone in your household currently has symptoms that look like measles, which include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis/pink eye)
- Tiny white spots inside the mouth
- Rash (flat, dry spots)

Contact the [campus health service] to report your illness. (Put contact info here). Notify the health department immediately of any suspected cases of measles by calling the Center for Health Protection, available 24/7 at **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796- 8773)**.

Anyone who has measles should stay home and avoid contact with others for 4 days after their rash began. They should not attend in-person classes, extracurriculars, work, or social activities. If they have not already notified their healthcare provider or NMDOH, they should do so as soon as possible.

Individuals who were exposed to measles at the above locations and times should refer to the table on the next page for instructions.

If you have questions regarding exposure, symptoms, or measles in general, please call the [campus health service] _____, at _____ or the New Mexico Department of Health Center for Health Protection at **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773)**.

Best Regards,

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Table for Higher Education Settings

Scenario	Recommendations for Exclusion or Other Actions
Isolation of People with Measles	People with suspected or confirmed measles must stay at home and avoid all public places until 4 days after their rash appeared.
People with Zero Doses of MMR Vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 dose of MMR vaccine is recommended within 72 hours of <u>initial</u> exposure to measles. If MMR vaccine is given within 72 hours of initial exposure, individuals can return to usual activities immediately. Self-monitor for measles symptoms (fever, cough, rash, etc.) for 21 days after last exposure. ➤ A second dose of MMR is strongly recommended at least 28 days after the first dose. ➤ If the student or staff member refuses or is unable to receive MMR vaccine within 72 hours of initial exposure: exclude them for 21 days after the last date they were exposed to measles.
People with One Dose of MMR Vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exposed students and staff with one prior dose of MMR can remain in school. However, they are strongly recommended to receive their second dose of MMR as soon as possible (at least 28 days after the first dose was given). ➤ Self-monitor for measles symptoms (fever, cough, rash, etc.) for 21 days after last exposure.
People with Evidence of Immunity	<p>People with evidence of immunity to measles do not need to be excluded, but should self-monitor for measles symptoms (fever, cough, rash, etc.) for 21 days after last exposure. This includes people who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written documentation of receiving two doses of MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine administered at least 28 days apart. • Laboratory evidence of immunity (such as a positive IgG titer for measles antibody). • Birth before 1957. <p>Previous laboratory confirmation of disease.</p>