

**Purpose:** Provide guidance for non-healthcare employers to prevent and respond to measles infection in your workforce.

## Prevent:

**Develop an organization-centered infection prevention plan:** When an employer is not covered by a regulatory standard that requires an infection control plan, voluntarily developing a plan can help keep the workforce healthy. The plan should include guidance on:

- Well-ventilated workspaces.
- Regular workspace disinfection with [List D](#) EPA-registered disinfectants.
- Vaccination in the absence of a regulatory requirement to vaccinate.
- Exposure prevention measures in the event a workforce member gets infected with measles.
- Return to work standards for workforce if they or a household contact gets infected with measles.

**Vaccinate:** Vaccination is safe and effective for most people. One dose of vaccine is 93% effective, and two doses are 97% effective at preventing illness. Workers may be more likely to get the vaccine if it is available to them at no cost. Unlike the flu vaccine, the measles vaccine does not need to be repeated yearly. Once you've had it, you do not need boosters except in specific cases. Employees should ask their doctor if concerned about their immunity status and no occupational medicine options are available. Vaccines are available through:

- Many doctors' offices.
- Urgent Care centers (call to confirm).
- Local pharmacies (check with locations based on child's age).
- Your [local public health office](#). (call to confirm).

**Promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.** Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands. More information is available at the [CDC website](#).

**Encourage frequent handwashing.** If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

**Encourage workforce to stay home when sick.** Measles is extremely contagious. [Symptoms](#) start with cough, runny nose, eye redness, and fever, and progress to rash. The rash starts on the head and spreads down the body. A person with measles is contagious from four days before rash onset through four days after it appears. Measles infection can cause severe illness and death in unvaccinated children and adults.

**Communicate** with employees about the [current measles outbreak](#) and what you are doing to protect them at work.

## Respond:

**Be watchful** for employees who may come to work with signs and symptoms of measles. If measles is suspected, advise them to seek care at the office of their healthcare provider, an urgent care, or an emergency room. They should notify the healthcare facility [before](#) they arrive that

measles is suspected so care can be taken to limit further spread.

**Report** suspected measles cases to the health department immediately by calling the New Mexico Department of Health's (NMDOH) Helpline available 24/7 at 1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773). We can help ensure proper control measures are implemented. NMDOH will work closely with you to contact workforce who may have been exposed to measles.

**Isolate measles-positive workforce:** The individual infected with measles must isolate – stay at home away from others and away from all public places, including, work, social activities, sports, recreation events, all extracurricular activities, and public places like grocery stores and churches. The individual can return to work 5 days after the rash appeared, if they are feeling well enough.

**Identify exposed workforce:** Exposure means sharing the same airspace as someone with measles, including in the two hours after an infected person has left the airspace. Risk for infection after exposure varies depending on a person's immunity status. For adults, proof of immunity includes:

- Written documentation of at least one MMR vaccine dose for people 18+ years old.
  - Note: Two doses are preferable. One dose may not be sufficient evidence of immunity for individuals with intense, prolonged contact to measles, such as to a household member.
- Laboratory evidence of measles immunity (positive antibody titer).
- Birth before 1957.

#### **High risk exposure: unknown or no documented immunity**

Any exposed worker who cannot show proof of immunity must be excluded from work but may return on day 22 after exposure, unless proof of immunity is provided before the 22 days ends.

- **If the excluded worker receives one documented dose of MMR within 72 hours after an initial exposure to measles, they may return to work immediately.** A second dose of MMR should be given at least 28 days later to complete the 2-dose series.
- **Unvaccinated workers (zero doses) who do not receive a dose of MMR within 72 hours of exposure (they refuse or are unable), including those who have a medical or other exemption to vaccination, must be excluded from work for 21 days. They may return on day 22** after the last known exposure to an infectious case. If there are multiple cases of measles at a workplace, the worker's exclusion might be significantly extended beyond 21 days, since the 21-day period would reset with the identification of each individual new case.
- **Excluded workforce must quarantine so they do not infect others.** Quarantine means staying at home, away from others, and away from all public places, including work, social activities, sports, recreation events, all extracurricular activities, and public places like grocery stores and churches.
- In rare situations, when someone receives immune globulin after exposure to measles, quarantine and symptom monitoring may be extended to 28 days.
- If an exposed individual can produce alternate evidence of immunity, such as a blood test showing antibodies to measles (also called an IgG antibody test), quarantine may be downgraded to symptom monitoring instead, following discussion with NMDOH.

#### **Medium risk exposure: one documented MMR dose AND high intensity of exposure**

High intensity exposures to a case of measles can include sharing living quarters, sharing small,

enclosed workspaces or vehicles, or engaging in regular or prolonged close contact.

- **Workers with significant exposure to a case, and who have only one documented dose of MMR, must quarantine** until they either receive a **second dose of vaccine as soon as possible** (as long as it has been at least 28 days since they received the first dose), **or** demonstrate immunity with a **positive IgG titer**.
- If the worker does not receive a second vaccine and has a negative IgG titer (or does not get one at all), they must quarantine through 21 days after the last exposure to a case. **Excluded workforce must quarantine so they do not infect others**. Quarantine means staying at home, away from others, and away from all public places, including work, social activities, sports, recreation events, all extracurricular activities, and public places like grocery stores and churches. They may return to work on day 22 after exposure.
- In rare situations, when someone receives immune globulin after exposure to measles, quarantine and symptom monitoring may be extended to 28 days.

### **Low risk exposure: documented immunity or one documented MMR dose AND low intensity of exposure**

Any exposed worker who can show proof of immunity by being born before 1957, having a positive IgG titer, **or** documented vaccination history (at least one MMR dose for lower-risk exposures, or two doses for medium risk exposures), may continue working, but must monitor for signs and symptoms of measles for 21 days after last known exposure. Remind families to be vigilant in watching for signs of measles to identify new cases early and prevent further spread.

Workers who have only one documented dose of MMR, but had low intensity exposure to a case, such as briefly passing in a hallway, are strongly recommended to get a second dose of MMR as soon as possible, and to self-monitor for symptoms for 21 days after last known exposure to a case.

**Testing is only appropriate when a rash appears. Please call 1-833-SWNURSE or 1-833-796-8773 for more information.**

\*\*\*\*\* Template Employer-to-Workforce Letter below \*\*\*\*\*

Date: [insert date]

Dear [insert name],

This letter is to notify you that a person with measles was present at [employer name] on the following date(s):

- [date 1]
- [date 2, etc.]

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads through the air and respiratory droplets. The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after a person with measles leaves the room. Children and adults who have not had measles or who have not received the 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 five 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?**

[Employer name], in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), strongly encourages you to review your vaccination status. Children usually receive the MMR vaccine at 12–15 months and again at 4–6 years of age. Talk to your healthcare provider if you are unsure of your vaccination status, if you have only had one 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 three 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:

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

- Rash (flat, dry spots)

- o The rash may appear red or pink on fair skin but may have no change in color on darker skin.

If you or anyone in your household currently has symptoms that look like measles, contact your healthcare provider. Notify the health department immediately for any suspected cases of measles by calling the Center for Health Protection NMDOH Helpline, available 24/7 at **1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796- 8773)**.

Anyone who has the measles should stay home and avoid contact with others through 4 days after their rash began. They should not attend work, parties, and/or other gatherings. They may return to work on day 5 after their rash began.

Those who were exposed to measles and who are unvaccinated should not attend work, parties, and/or other gatherings through 21 days after they were exposed. They may return to work on day 22 after exposure.

If you or anyone else in your household has a weakened immune system or is pregnant and has never had measles or the measles vaccine, talk with your doctor immediately.

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

Best Regards,

**[insert employer signature]**