



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Children and Adults Should be Up-to-Date on Recommended Vaccinations, Including for Measles Amid National Outbreak**

*Vaccinations are the safest, most effective way to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases*

COLUMBUS – As [National Infant Immunization Week](#) (April 27 – May 4) winds down and with measles cases confirmed in 22 states, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH reminds all Ohioans about the importance of children and adults being up-to-date on all recommended vaccinations. Ohio currently has no confirmed measles cases while neighboring states Indiana, Kentucky, and Michigan do.

Vaccines stimulate the body's own immune system to protect the person against specific diseases. Some serious and potentially life-threatening diseases that vaccines can help prevent include but are not limited to measles, mumps, rubella, whooping cough, chickenpox, tetanus, hepatitis A and B, and flu.

"Vaccination is the safest, most effective way to prevent serious vaccine-preventable diseases in children and adults, including measles," said Dr. Acton. "I urge all Ohioans to talk with your healthcare provider to make sure that you and your children have received all recommended vaccines. If you do not have a healthcare provider, contact your local health department which may offer immunization clinics."

The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is highly effective at preventing transmission of measles. One dose of MMR vaccine is approximately 93% effective at preventing measles. Two doses are approximately 97% effective.

Measles is extremely contagious and can spread to others through coughing and sneezing. If one person has measles, up to 90% of those close to that person and who are not immune will also become infected. The measles virus can live for up to two hours in air where an infected person coughed or sneezed. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch an infected surface and then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can also become infected. People infected with measles can spread it to others from four days before, through four days after, a rash appears.

While Ohio does not have any confirmed measles cases, more than 700 have been reported in 22 states – the most cases reported in the U.S. since 1994. Measles is still common in many parts of world, and large outbreaks are currently occurring in Israel, Ukraine, and the Philippines. Travelers with measles bring the disease into U.S. where it can spread in communities with pockets of unvaccinated people.

Measles symptoms include a rash, high fever, runny nose, cough, loss of appetite, and red, watery eyes. The rash usually lasts 5-6 days and begins at the hairline, moves to the face and upper neck, and proceeds down the body. Diarrhea and ear infections are common complications of measles. More severe complications may also occur. As many as one out of every 20 children with measles gets pneumonia, the most common cause of death from measles in young children. About one child out of every 1,000 who get measles will develop encephalitis (swelling of the brain) that can lead to convulsions and can leave the child deaf or with intellectual disability. For every 1,000 children who get measles, one or two will die from it.

(more)

During pregnancy, measles increases the risk of premature labor, miscarriage, and low-birth-weight infants. Measles can be especially severe in persons with compromised immune systems. Complications from measles are more common among children younger than 5 years old and adults older than 20 years old.

ODH is sharing vaccination guidance and information with all its partners, including local health departments, hospitals, healthcare providers, K-12 educators and school nurses, higher education leaders, other state agencies, and faith-based organizations.

More information about measles is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website ([here](#)) as well as CDC's recommended immunization schedules ([here](#)).

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