

**HEALTH ALERT NETWORK | HEALTH ADVISORY | Oct. 11, 2022**

## **Health care Providers are Reminded to Think Measles**

The [Minnesota Department of Health](#) is reporting 17 cases of measles in 2022. The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would like North Dakota health care providers to keep measles in mind when evaluating patients with clinically compatible symptoms, especially those without a history of vaccination and/or recent travel. Symptoms of measles include cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis, fever, malaise, and [maculopapular rash](#). People at increased risk of contracting measles include those who are unvaccinated, immunocompromised, or have recently traveled to areas with measles cases or where measles is endemic. Suspected cases of measles should immediately be reported to HHS by calling 1.800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378. Individuals who are suspected to have measles should immediately be placed in a negative pressure room or roomed alone if in a hospital or clinical setting and should isolate at home while awaiting test results. Providers should order a [PCR](#) and [IgM](#) tests on patients for whom measles is suspected.

Providers are also reminded to encourage measles vaccination, especially for people planning to travel abroad who have not previously been immunized. Measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is routinely recommended at 12-15 months of age and again at four to six years old. Two doses of MMR vaccine are recommended to ensure proper protection against measles. People born before 1957 are presumed to be immune to measles, as these individuals have a high likelihood of having had the disease. Vaccination rates declined during the COVID-19 pandemic with only [81.8% of 19-35-month-olds](#) and [92.23% of North Dakota Kindergarteners](#) up-to-date on the measles vaccine. Local rates vary greatly, with some areas more susceptible to outbreaks. Experts believe measles immunization coverage needs to be above 95% to prevent outbreaks of disease.

Measles is a dangerous illness, which kills about 1 in 500 people who are infected. Hospitalization may be required in about 20% of people, and treatment options are limited to supportive care. Because the virus is airborne, people infected with measles

are extremely contagious. Those with no immunity who are exposed to measles must quarantine for 21 days after exposure.

*For more information, including regional data on vaccination coverage, please visit the North Dakota Immunization Unit website at <https://hhs.nd.gov/immunizations>*