

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

February 20, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians:

There is a cluster of measles cases that has been identified at Manatee Bay Elementary. The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is continuously working with all partners, including Broward County Public Schools and local hospitals, to identify close contacts. Measles can be transmitted four days prior to the start of symptoms. When measles is detected in a school, it is normally recommended that individuals without history of prior infection or vaccination stay home for up to 21 days. This is the period of time that the virus can be transmitted.

Individuals with a history of prior infection or vaccination who have received the full series of the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) immunization are 98% protected and are unlikely to contract measles. Up to 90% of individuals without immunity will contract measles if exposed. Because of the high likelihood of infection, it is normally recommended that children stay home until the end of the infectious period, which is currently March 7, 2024. As the epidemiological investigation continues, this date could change.

However, due to the high immunity rate in the community, as well as the burden on families and educational cost of healthy children missing school, DOH is deferring to parents or guardians to make decisions about school attendance. This recommendation may change as epidemiological investigations continue.

Broward County School District is prepared to provide continuous learning to all children at Manatee Bay Elementary School whose parents/guardians choose to keep them at home. If someone in your household contracts measles, all members of the household should consider themselves exposed and monitor symptoms.

Because your child may have already been exposed, you should watch your child for signs and symptoms of the disease, including a rash that often develops on the face and neck before spreading to the rest of the body. Other symptoms include high fever, which can reach 105°F, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. All children presenting with symptoms of illness should not attend school until symptoms have fully subsided without medication.

If you suspect or notice any of the above symptoms, contact your health care provider to receive instructions on how to safely seek medical attention prior to visiting a clinic or hospital. This will prevent additional exposure among other patients. Do not abruptly visit your health care provider or DOH-Broward without contacting them ahead of time. To support parents/guardians making informed decisions, a document with frequently asked questions is attached to this letter.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
State Surgeon General

MEASLES

Rubeola



Rubeola, known as measles, is an illness caused by one of the most contagious viruses.

How does it spread?

- Those with a prior history of infection or who have received the full series of the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) immunization are 98% protected and are unlikely to contract measles.
- Measles spreads through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes.
- Measles can remain infectious in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area.
- If 10 individuals without immunity come in contact with measles, up to 9 of them will contract the disease.

What is the severity?

In some cases, measles may cause severe illnesses including pneumonia or encephalitis. While encephalitis is rare, this swelling of the brain requires hospitalization and intensive treatment. It can cause seizures, hallucinations, permanent brain damage, blindness, hearing loss, and memory loss.

Who is at highest risk of severe illness?

- Children and adults that are immunocompromised or have underlying health conditions.
- Infants under 12 months.
- Pregnant women.

Is there treatment?

Since measles is caused by a virus, there is no specific treatment. Medications can help manage symptoms. However, based on exposure time frame, susceptible contacts may be candidates for post-exposure prophylaxis through MMR or immunoglobulin through their health care provider.

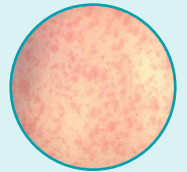
What should I do if I recognize symptoms?

Do not abruptly visit a health care provider without contacting them ahead of time. If you suspect or notice any symptoms, contact your health care provider or local county health department to receive instructions on how to safely seek medical attention without exposing others.

Symptoms

Measles symptoms appear 7 to 14 days after contact with the virus and include:

- High fever up to 105° F
- Red, watery eyes
- Cough
- Runny nose



MEASLES RASH

The most common symptom of measles is a rash that often develops on the face and neck, but can spread to the entire body.

Measles rash appears 3 to 5 days after the first symptoms.