MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES

MEASLES

More than just a rash

Current situation

Updated: August 2026

Vaccine uptake continues to decrease in Missouri, making children more vulnerable to measles.

COLE COUNTY

The statewide kindergarten exemption rate for the MMR vaccine in 2025 is 6.00%, which is up from 5.20% in 2024.

KINDERGARTEN VACCINATION RATE
STATE OF MISSOURI (2025)

89.50%

PRELIMINARY, SELF-REPORTED DATA FOR STUDENTS WITH TWO DOSES OF MMR VACCINE

2019 STATE VACCINATION RATE: 94.60%

KINDERGARTEN VACCINATION RATE
COLE COUNTY (2025)

92.70%

PRELIMINARY, SELF-REPORTED DATA FOR STUDENTS WITH TWO DOSES OF MMR VACCINE

KINDERGARTEN EXEMPTION RATE
COLE COUNTY (2025)

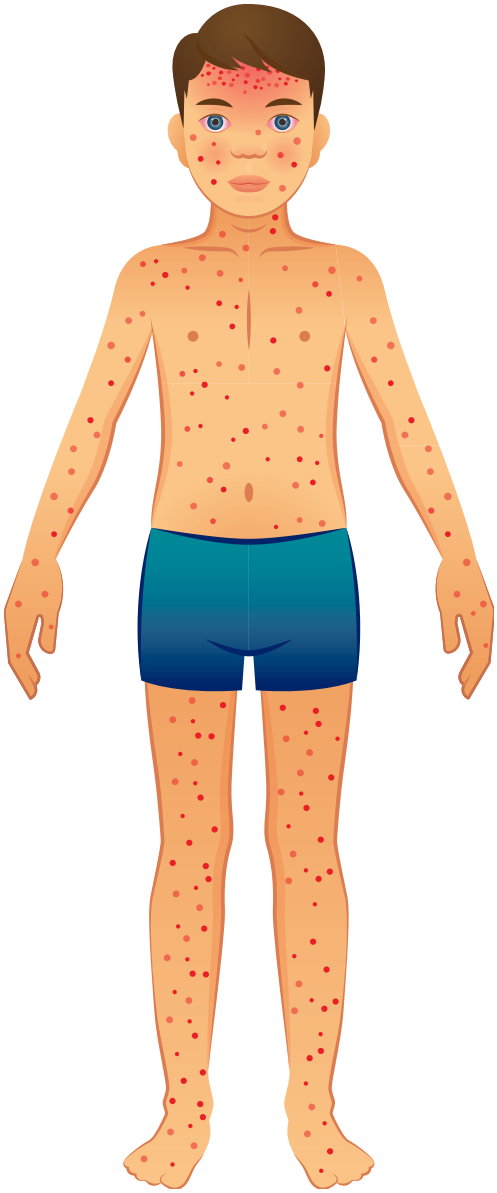
5.10%

PRELIMINARY, SELF-REPORTED DATA FOR STUDENTS WITH TWO DOSES OF MMR VACCINE

What you need to know

1. Measles is a very contagious disease. **One person with measles can easily pass it on to 9 out of 10 people around them who are unvaccinated or do not have natural immunity.**
2. **Measles can be very dangerous, especially for babies and immunocompromised adults, and a significant proportion of measles cases will need hospitalization.** One in 5 infected persons develops pneumonia, which could be fatal. In some cases, a brain infection may occur and result in swelling, brain damage or death.
3. **Herd immunity** is crucial for preventing disease outbreaks in the community and protecting vulnerable populations who cannot receive vaccines. It can be achieved by 95% of a community being fully vaccinated by two doses of the MMR vaccine.
4. Missouri's measles vaccination rate of 89.50% is **too low to protect our kids from outbreaks** based on preliminary school-reported data.
5. Two doses of the MMR vaccine provides **97% lifetime protection against measles.**

Measles Quick Facts



- **Most measles cases are among preschool children, adolescents and young adults.**
  - Anyone who isn't vaccinated is at risk of getting measles, regardless of age.
- Measles symptoms usually appear in **two stages, starting 1 – 2 weeks after a person has been exposed to the virus.**
  - The first stage starts with a runny nose, cough, a rising fever and eyes may become red and sensitive to light.
  - The second stage begins about 3 – 7 days later and includes a high temperature and a red blotchy rash that begins on the head and works its way down the body.
- A person with measles is **contagious from 4 days before the rash appears until 4 days after the rash appears.**
  - It spreads through the air when a person with measles coughs or sneezes and can live in the air for up to 2 hours.
  - It can also live on surfaces.

Severe Complications

Pneumonia

Severe Diarrhea

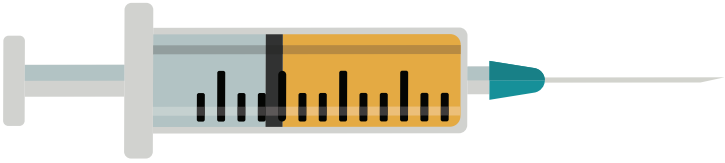
Brain Infection

Blindness

Ear Infection

Vaccination: Safe and Effective

Two doses last a lifetime, providing 97% protection



Vaccination offers the best protection against measles. Children should be vaccinated against measles at 12 – 15 months old and again at 4 – 6 years old.

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