

**RSU/SAD59**  
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5/21/2019

Dear Parents,

This letter is to inform you that a student of Madison Junior High School recently tested positive for measles and attended class at Madison Area Memorial High School. Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person and can spread easily in school settings. It spreads to others through breathing, coughing, and sneezing. Measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace or on a surface where the infected person coughed or sneezed. Other people can breathe the contaminated air or touch an infected surface, then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth to become infected. Measles is so contagious that over 90% of people who are exposed and not immune will get the disease.

Measles usually begins with a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth. Three to five days after symptoms begin a rash breaks out and usually begins as flat red spots on the hairline of the face and then spreads down the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. Small raised bumps may also appear on the top of the flat red spots.

Immediately call your healthcare provider if you or your child develops signs or symptoms characteristic of measles. Your healthcare provider will tell you what to do next and can make special arrangements to evaluate you without putting other patients and staff at risk.

The only way to prevent measles is by vaccination with two doses of measles vaccine. Call your healthcare provider to determine if you and your family members are up-to-date on measles vaccination. If you are not up-to-date or cannot find vaccination records, it is recommended that you get a MMR vaccine as soon as possible. Two doses of MMR vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles; one dose is about 93% effective. Some people who get two doses of MMR vaccine may still get measles if they are exposed to the virus. However, symptoms are generally milder in vaccinated people and they are less likely to spread the disease. For questions about vaccination please contact the Maine Immunization Program at 800-867-4775 or through [immunizeme@maine.gov](mailto:immunizeme@maine.gov).

Maine CDC also recommends the following prevention methods:

- **Wash your hands:** Both the general public and healthcare providers should remember to wash their hands frequently to prevent the spread of measles.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes:** Use tissues, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve.
- **Stay home when you are sick:** Symptomatic individuals should remain home while sick. If you have measles you should stay home for four days after the rash develops and can return to school or work on the fifth day. Staying home is important to prevent spreading measles to other people.
- **Stay away from people who are sick:** Symptomatic individuals can easily spread the virus to other people through breathing, coughing, or sneezing.

More information about measles can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vaccine/measles.shtml> and <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/>.

Sincerely,  
Bonnie Levesque – Superintendent  
Monica Beach – District Nurse