

PREPARING AND RESPONDING TO MEASLES: Checklist for Summer Camps



WHY SHOULD SUMMER CAMPS PREPARE FOR MEASLES?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. If one person has measles, up to 9 in 10 people nearby will become infected if they are not protected.

Measles can spread quickly in summer camps because campers and staff spend a lot of time together in close contact with each other. Measles is more than just a rash—it can cause serious health complications or even death. About 1 in 5 people who get measles will be hospitalized. The best protection is the **measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine**.

The risk for widespread measles in the U.S. remains low. However, measles cases occur in the U.S. every year when unvaccinated travelers get measles while they are in other countries. Outbreaks also occur when measles spreads in under-vaccinated communities. Anyone without immunity to measles is at risk.

PREPARE FOR MEASLES BEFORE SUMMER CAMP OPENS

- **Know how to contact your health department** for assistance when measles is suspected in a camper, staff member, or volunteer.
- **Review applicable state or local laws** and regulations on public health-related **camp requirements**.
- **Communicate applicable state, local, and/or camp vaccine requirements** to campers, staff, and volunteers before camp begins. The best way to prevent the spread of measles is to ensure that all campers, staff, and volunteers are vaccinated or are immune to measles.
- **Maintain documentation of measles immunity status for all campers, staff, and volunteers**, including any with medical or other exemptions from vaccination. This information will help the health department identify people who are not immune to measles, so that they can be offered **post-exposure prophylaxis** to help prevent them from getting sick if they are exposed. See **sample documentation template**.
- **Make sure you have a supply of facemasks** to give to a person with measles symptoms.
- **Identify an isolation space** where a camper with measles symptoms can wait for a caregiver to pick them up. This will help prevent other people from getting sick.
 - » Choose a separate room (not shared with anyone else) with a door that can close and a window that can open to the outdoors, ideally with access to a separate bathroom.
- Remind staff and caregivers that people **should stay at home when they are sick**.
- **Be watchful for campers, staff, and volunteers who may come to camp with fever and other signs and symptoms of measles:**
 - » First symptoms: Fever with cough, runny nose, and/or red, watery eyes
 - » 2–3 days after symptoms start: **Tiny white spots** inside the mouth
 - » 3–5 days after symptoms start: **Rash** (flat, red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, torso, arms, legs, and feet)

Responding to Measles in Summer Camps

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS: WHAT TO DO IN THE FIRST 10 MINUTES AFTER MEASLES IS SUSPECTED



When a camper, staff member, or volunteer has measles symptoms, take these actions IMMEDIATELY:

- ☐ **Give the person a facemask** (if 2 years and older).
To limit the spread of respiratory secretions, facemasks should be well-fitting and cover their mouth and nose.
- ☐ **Isolate the person with measles symptoms to protect others from exposure.**
 - » Move **a camper with measles symptoms** to the designated isolation space and contact a caregiver to pick them up. Keep the door closed and the window open.
 - » Instruct **an adult with measles symptoms** to isolate at home. If they are unable to leave camp immediately, have them wait in the designated isolation space until transportation is arranged.
 - » If measles is suspected, advise the caregiver/staff member/volunteer to seek medical care.
 - » Staff or volunteers who monitor an isolated child should be immune to measles.
 - » After a person with measles symptoms leaves the isolation space, it should remain vacant for at least two hours. Then, clean and disinfect the space with an **EPA-registered disinfectant** suitable for hepatitis B and HIV (these are also effective against the measles virus).
- ☐ **Contact your state or local health department.**
They will have further guidance for isolation, testing, care, and transport, if needed, for the person with measles symptoms.
- ☐ **Seek emergency care** if the person who is sick gets rapidly worse or if they experience trouble breathing, pain when breathing or coughing, dehydration, a fever or headache that won't stop, confusion, decreased alertness or severe weakness, blue color around the mouth, or low energy. **Notify staff at the healthcare facility of your concern for measles before arrival so that they can put procedures in place to prevent spread.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS AFTER ISOLATION

Be prepared to work with your health department on the following actions, based on their recommendations:

- **Make a list of people who might have been exposed to the person with suspected measles.**
The health department may recommend that campers, staff, and volunteers who are not immune to measles should be excluded from camp to protect their health and prevent further spread. The health department may also offer them post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent infection after exposure.
- **Inform caregivers** that someone at their child's camp has had measles symptoms, and let them know if their child has been exposed. Ask them to watch for measles symptoms in their children and other household members for 21 days (even if they are immune). See **sample notification templates**.
- Ask staff and volunteers to **watch for measles symptoms in themselves and campers for 21 days**.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OVERNIGHT CAMPS

- When choosing an isolation space for a camper with measles symptoms, choose a place where they could stay for several days, in case a caregiver must travel a long distance to pick them up.
- Be prepared to provide on-site isolation space for staff or volunteers with measles symptoms, in case they are unable to leave the camp to isolate.

RESOURCES

Be Ready for Measles Toolkit:

www.cdc.gov/measles/php/toolkit/index.html

Measles Isn't Just a Little Rash Fact Sheet:

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/measles-isnt-just-a-little-rash-infographic.html

Do You Think Your Child Has Measles?:

www.cdc.gov/measles/downloads/measles-factsheet-seek-care-508.pdf

Preventing Measles Before and After Travel Fact Sheet:

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/before-after-travel-factsheet.html