

Prepare for and respond to measles at work

Checklist for businesses



Measles is a **highly contagious virus** that spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks, or breathes. Measles virus can stay in the air for up to 2 hours after a person has left. If 1 person has measles, up to **9 in 10 people nearby** will become infected if they are not protected.

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**.

Measles can spread quickly in workplaces if staff are not vaccinated, especially in places where they spend a lot of time together and in close contact with each other.

Keep your staff and customers healthy.

Prepare for measles

- **Save the contact information** for your [local health department](#) so you can reach out if you have an employee or customer who suspects they have measles.
- **Encourage employees to stay home when they are sick.** We encourage businesses to offer sick leave or an option to work from home for employees who are sick with measles and for those who are not immune and have been exposed to measles.
- **Encourage employees to have at least 1 dose of the MMR vaccine.** Most employees will have had the vaccine as children. The vaccine is safe and one dose will provide 93% protection. Two doses provide 97% protection. Employees who were vaccinated as children are still protected. The more employees who are vaccinated, the less likely it is for an outbreak to happen at your facility.
- **Consider having a plan** in place to notify employees if there is a measles exposure in the workplace.

• Educate your employees on the symptoms of measles:



» **First symptoms:** High fever with cough, runny nose, and/or red, watery eyes

» **3–5 days after symptoms start:** Rash

Note: The rash is usually made up of flat, red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, torso, arms, legs, and feet.

Immediate actions

What to do immediately if an employee or customer is at your workplace and suspects they have measles

» Send them home immediately.



- **Give the person a face mask to wear until they can leave.** Face masks should fit well and cover their mouth and nose to stop respiratory droplets from getting into the air.



- **Offer them a private room** away from others if they need to wait to be picked up. Keep the door to the room closed and a window open if possible. Close off the room and do not let anyone in for a minimum of 2 hours after the person has left. You can also use an outdoor space, weather and safety permitting.



- **Contact your local health department.** They will have further guidance for isolation, testing, and care, if needed, for the person who may have measles.



- Encourage the person to **call their healthcare provider** about getting tested for measles. They should not enter a clinic without calling first.

What to do after the person who may have measles has left the workplace

- **Close off the rooms** the person had been in and do not reopen them until it has been 2 hours since the person left the room.
- After 2 hours, **clean and disinfect** the spaces with a disinfectant like Lysol disinfectant spray or Clorox disinfecting wipes. You may also use a mix of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Let the solution sit on the surface for at least 1 minute before you wipe it off.

Additional actions

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 employees who are not immune to measles stay home from work to protect their health and prevent further spread. The health department may also offer them medication to prevent them from getting sick after exposure.
- **Inform** staff that someone who may have measles has been in the workplace. Ask staff to watch for measles symptoms for 21 days after the exposure (even if they are immune). See [sample notification templates](#).

How long should employees with measles stay at home?

Employees who are diagnosed with measles should stay home and away from all public places until 4 days have passed since the rash began and they are physically able to return to work.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Day the rash first appeared

Day you can go back to work

 = contagious period

Employees who have been exposed to measles may be recommended to stay home if they are not immune to measles. They will work with the local health department to determine how long they need to stay home.

Scan for additional measles resources:

