

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Measles in Nebraska

Two confirmed measles cases are reported in Eastern Nebraska. No cases have been reported in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department district which includes: Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

This year the United States is experiencing a record number of measles cases. From January 1 to January 30, 2015, there have been 102 confirmed measles cases reported to Center for Disease Control (CDC) from 14 states.

“Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person,” shares Melissa Propp, SWNPHD Public Health Nurse. “Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected.”

In 2014, 644 confirmed measles cases were reported from 27 states. This is the highest number of measles cases documented in the U.S. since 2000 according to CDC.

“We encourage everyone to make sure their children receive the measles vaccine,” explains Propp. Babies are at most risk as they do not receive their first measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) shot until twelve months of age.

SWNPHD is notified by the State of Nebraska of any measles cases. “We work closely with the state to follow-up on reported cases,” shared Propp. “One of our goals is prevention and we are committed to protecting our residents in outbreak situations.”

Measles can spread through:

- coughing and sneezing
- can live for up to two hours on a surface or in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed
- if other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected.
- infected people spreading measles to others from four days before to four days after the rash appears
- through humans only, no animal transmissions

Measles is still common in many parts of the world including some countries in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. Travelers with measles continue to bring the disease into the U.S. Measles can spread when it reaches a community in the U.S. where groups of people are unvaccinated.

For more information on signs, symptoms and countries having measles outbreaks, contact SWNPHD by calling 308-345-4223 or email: nurse@swhealth.ne.gov. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby's. You can also follow us on [Facebook.com/swnphd](https://www.facebook.com/swnphd) and [Twitter@swpublichealth](https://twitter.com/swpublichealth).

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