

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Measles 101

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to get their MMR vaccines on time to protect against measles. Measles is a very contagious disease that causes high fevers and rash. It was rare in the United States since the invention of the measles vaccine in 1963, but recently cases of measles have been reported in several states. There have not been any cases reported in Nebraska yet. There are large outbreaks of measles in Europe and other parts of the world, so in this global era it is very important to be protected from this serious illness.

“Measles is a highly contagious vaccine-preventable disease,” states Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager with SWNPHD. “The MMR vaccine we use is very safe and effective. Measles can be a very dangerous disease for young children and babies.”

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of measles start with high fever, cough, runny nose, and red watery eyes. Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots known as Koplik spots can be seen in the mouth. A few days later a red rash usually appears on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body. Symptoms of measles can appear anywhere from 2 days to 2 weeks after exposure.

Infection

Measles spreads quickly when people come in contact with the virus. Nine out of 10 unvaccinated people will develop measles if they are exposed. This virus spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The measles virus can stay in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after a person leaves a space, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A person with measles can spread the disease to other people before they show symptoms.

Prevention

CDC recommends that people get MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps, and rubella. Children should get two doses of MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 to 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. Teens and adults should also make sure to be up to date on their MMR vaccinations, especially if planning on traveling to areas outside the US.

If you have questions about measles, the MMR vaccine, or any other vaccines, contact your medical provider or the public health nurses at SWNPHD. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many additional resources. Call (308) 345-4223, one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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