

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

April 23, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In recent weeks, three cases of measles have been identified and reported in persons with unknown or no measles vaccinations in neighboring counties. "It's important all Floridians make sure they have received the measles vaccination because those who are fully immunized have very little risk of developing the disease," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong.

People who may have come into contact with infected individuals are being notified and counseled. The department continues to work closely with the medical provider community in an effort to maintain its current level of readiness to identify cases and respond to any diagnosed cases of measles in Florida.

The department is also prepared to work closely with the school district if a case of measles is identified involving potential exposure within the school community. Parents of students with exemptions from required immunizations must be aware that a case of measles involving their children's school(s) will require **all children without documented proof of immunization or immunity to measles to be excluded immediately from attending school** for a minimum of 21 days from the time of exposure or longer should secondary cases occur.

Measles is spread through the air by breathing, coughing or sneezing and is highly contagious. It can be transmitted from four days before the rash becomes visible to four days after the rash appears. The symptoms of measles generally begin approximately seven to 14 days after a person is exposed to someone with measles, and include the following: fever, rash, cough, runny nose and eyes, and fatigue. Anyone who has these symptoms should contact his or her healthcare provider. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html.

The most effective form of protection from this virus is through vaccination. Children should be immunized against measles with the combination measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) and should receive two doses, with the first at 12 to 15 months of age, and the second at four to six years of age. People with underlying health conditions should discuss with their health care provider to determine the need for additional booster doses. **The department encourages all Floridians who have not been immunized to get vaccinated immediately.** Vaccines for children are available through your doctor's office or your local health department clinic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alina Alonso".

Alina Alonso, M.D.
Director

Florida Department of Health

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