



WISEBURN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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2019 Measles Outbreak Parent Information Letter

May 7, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The United States, California, and Los Angeles County are experiencing a significant increase in measles cases and many outbreaks. A number of Los Angeles County residents have recently developed measles and more cases will likely occur among people who have had contact with persons who were infected. We have provided the following information to answer questions that you may have about measles and to help you protect your family against this disease.

What is measles? Measles is a disease that is caused by a virus. Symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose, red and watery eyes, and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. Measles can cause ear infections, diarrhea and serious illness such as pneumonia and encephalitis (swelling around the brain). Although rare, it can lead to death.

Most people who have never been vaccinated against or sick with the measles will get it if they have contact with someone who has measles. The virus can spread very easily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also stay in the air and on surfaces for hours. So, you can be infected by being in a room that an infected person was in or by touching an object that they've touched. This is why it is so important for you and your children to be vaccinated.

How can you prevent measles? Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep from getting and spreading the measles. People should get the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine if they haven't been vaccinated or don't know if they were. MMR vaccines are very effective and can prevent almost all cases of measles. Children should receive their first dose of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months of age and a second dose at 4-6 years of age. All adolescents and adults born after 1956 who haven't been vaccinated should also be vaccinated. International travelers are at high risk for measles; therefore, all family members, even infants >6 months of age should be vaccinated prior to travel, if not already immune.

If you or your child has not received the recommended doses, call your doctor to get the MMR vaccine, which may be covered by your insurance. Families who do not have a regular health care provider or health insurance that covers vaccines can visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/IZclinics/clinics.htm> or call the Los Angeles County Information Line at 2-1-1 for referrals to providers offering vaccines at no or low-cost.

If you think that you or someone in your family has been exposed to or has measles, contact your doctor's office right away. Tell them that you might have measles before you go, so they can take steps to prevent other patients and staff from being exposed. If your child has measles or has been exposed to someone with measles outside of school, please notify your school principal immediately.

Are measles vaccines required to attend school? Yes. California law requires that students receive measles vaccines to attend school. Two doses of MMR vaccine given on or after the first birthday are required for students entering kindergarten and for transfer students entering the 7th grade. Currently, only one dose of MMR vaccine is required for students transferring into all other grade levels, but this is changing. After July 1, 2019, two doses of MMR vaccine will be required at admission or transfer for T/K-12 students.

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(California Health and Safety Code, Division 105, Part 2, Chapter 1, Sections 120325-120380). If there is a case of measles at your school, exposed children who do not have documentation of 2 doses of MMR vaccine will be excluded from attending school for 21 days or until an immunity test confirms they are protected. This is for their protection and to prevent the spread of measles.

Thank you for taking steps to protect yourself, your children, and our school against measles. To learn more:

- Visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles/index.htm, www.cdc.gov/measles/, and www.shotsforschool.org.
- Contact one of district nurses, Ellen Russ at eruss@wiseburn.org or Roxanne Vollmer, RN at rvollmer@wiseburn.org
- Call the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Program at (213) 351-7800.

Sincerely,

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