

# Measles: Current Situation and Community Preparedness

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# Objectives

- **Provide an update on the current situation in the United States, regionally, and North Carolina**
- **Share how Wake County is preparing**
- **Share potential community impacts if Measles occurs in Wake County**
- **Highlight prevention measures families can take**
- **Highlight where to get an MMR vaccine in Wake County**

**Disclaimer: The information in this presentation is current as of March 13, 2026.**

# Why Measles Matters

## Why Public Health Closely Monitors Measles

- Measles is a highly contagious viral disease
- The virus can remain in the air for **up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves the area**
- The virus can lead to serious complications in high-risk populations including infants, children, pregnant individuals, and immunocompromised persons
- The Good News! **Two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine provide strong protection against the virus.**

# What to Look For?-Common Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms usually begin 7 to 14 days after exposure but can take as long as 21 days to appear. Early symptoms include:

- Fever, cough, runny nose, red, watery eyes
- Sometimes small, white bumps or spots appear in the mouth. These are called Koplik spots.

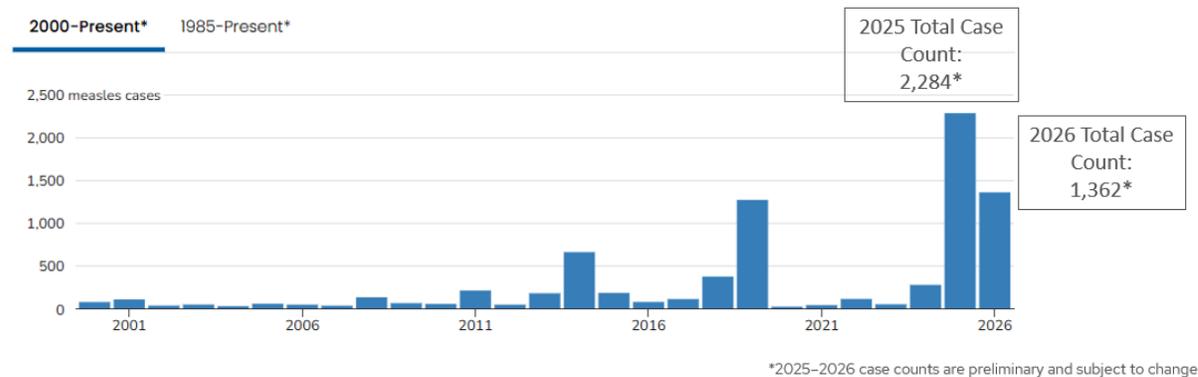
As the disease progresses:

- After a few days, a rash appears, usually on the head or face. As the days pass, the rash spreads to other parts of the body, including the torso, arms and legs.

# Current Situation: Measles in the United States

## Yearly measles cases

as of March 12, 2026



- 1,362 confirmed measles cases reported in the U.S. in 2026 so far
- Cases reported across 31 jurisdictions
- Most cases are linked to outbreaks
- Outbreaks are often associated with:
  - International travel
  - Pockets of lower vaccination coverage

# Current Situation: Regionally

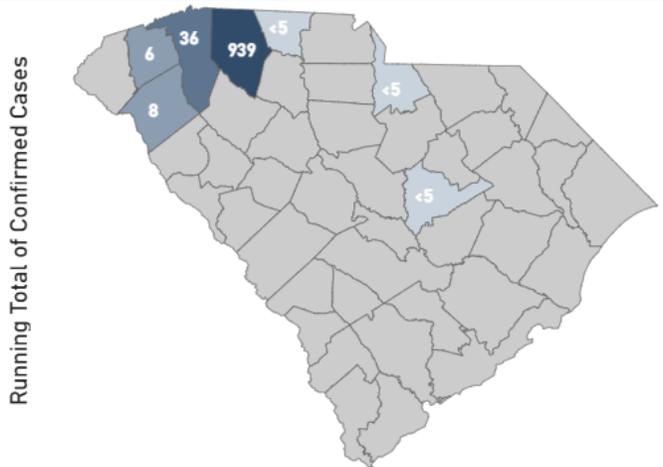
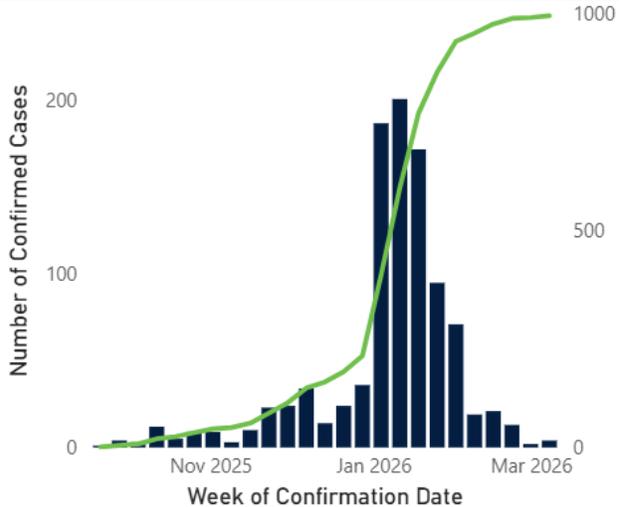
## Large Measles Outbreak in South Carolina

- Ongoing outbreak centered in the Upstate region
- Nearly 1,000 cases reported since October 2025
- Many cases linked to community transmission
- Regional outbreaks increase risk for neighboring states

Measles Cases, by Confirmation Week

Measles Cases, by County

Number of confirmed cases



# Current Situation: Measles in North Carolina



- 24 confirmed cases since December 2025
- Cases reported in several counties including:
  - Buncombe
  - Rutherford
  - Burke
  - Mecklenburg
  - Cabarrus
  - Union
  - Johnston
  - Nash
  - Lincoln
  - Polk
- Several cases linked to travel to South Carolina outbreak areas
- Areas within North Carolina where person-to-person spread of measles in the community is known or suspected to have occurred include Buncombe County and the Charlotte Metropolitan Area

Data as of March 12, 2026, Source: [NCDHHS](#)

# Wake County Status

## What We Are Seeing in Wake County

- **At this time, no confirmed measles cases among Wake County residents**
- Exposure events have occurred from travelers passing through Wake County
- Ongoing monitoring continues, utilizing multiple surveillance systems
- Wake County Public Health remains on heightened alert

# Preparedness Efforts

## How is Wake County Public Health Preparing?, we are :

- Monitoring surveillance systems and case reports
- Reviewing laboratory testing protocols
- Conducting case investigation and contact tracing when needed
- Coordinating with hospitals and regional partners
- Conducting preparedness exercises and response planning
- Responding to exposure events that have occurred from travelers passing through the county
- Providing guidance and immunizations, including the MMR vaccination, through Wake County Public Health clinics

# Potential Community Impacts if Measles Occurs in Wake County

- Individuals with measles must isolate until 4 days after rash onset to prevent further spread
- Public health conducts case investigation and contact tracing to identify and notify exposed individuals
- **People without evidence of immunity who are exposed may need to stay home from school, childcare, or work for up to 21 days after exposure**
- Schools and community settings may coordinate with public health to notify exposed individuals and implement response measures
- In the event of a measles outbreak, response measures may temporarily affect school attendance, childcare operations, workplace activities, and community events

# Prevention for Children and Families

**Individuals should check whether they or their children are vaccinated or immune against measles.**

- Everyone 12 months and older should receive the MMR vaccine
- Infants 6–11 months who are traveling may need an early dose
- Parents and healthcare providers may consider early vaccination for infants 6–11 months in areas with measles transmission
- Talk with your healthcare provider about vaccination if you live in or plan to visit areas experiencing measles outbreaks
- Early symptoms can resemble other respiratory illnesses. If a child develops fever and rash, keep them home from school and contact a healthcare provider before seeking care
- **Not sure if you are protected? Use the NCDHHS “Check Your Immunity to Measles” tool.**

# Where to Get an MMR Vaccine in Wake County

## **MMR vaccines are in Wake County at:**

Wake County Public Health Clinics

- Public Health Center-Swinburne Street

Wake County Regional Public Health Centers

- Northern Regional Center – Wake Forest
- Eastern Regional Center – Zebulon
- Southern Regional Center – Fuquay-Varina

Other Vaccination Options

- Primary care providers and pediatricians
- Local pharmacies and retail clinics
- Urgent care clinics and healthcare systems

## **Learn more about the MMR vaccine and how to find a vaccination provider:**

<https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/immunization/details/mmr-vaccine>

# What Communities Should Know

## Key Messages

- Measles is highly contagious but **preventable through vaccination**
- **Most cases in North Carolina have occurred in people who are not vaccinated**
- Two doses of the **MMR vaccine provide strong protection**
- Wake County Public Health **is actively monitoring and preparing for potential cases**
- **Residents should check their vaccination records.** If unsure, speak with a healthcare provider or use the NCDHHS "**Check Your Immunity**" tool.

# Resources

- To access Wake County Public Health's measles informational page, please visit <https://www.wake.gov/departments-government/public-health/communicable-diseases-and-pests/measles>
- For information on measles cases and outbreaks in North Carolina, please visit <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/communicable-disease/infectious-respiratory-diseases/measles-rubeola/measles-cases-and-outbreaks-north-carolina>
- For information on Measles Guidance for NC Child Care, Schools and Colleges/Universities, please visit [Measles Guidance for NC Child Care, Schools and Colleges/Universities | Division of Public Health](#)
- For information about the MMR vaccine and how to find a vaccination provider, visit: <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/immunization/details/mmr-vaccine>
- To access the "Check Your Immunity" tool informational page, please visit: <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/communicable-disease/infectious-respiratory-diseases/measles-rubeola/check-your-immunity-measles>