

PRESS RELEASE

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Measles cases confirmed in Le Sueur County

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has confirmed two cases of measles in Le Sueur County. These are the first confirmed measles cases in south central Minnesota in 2017. The confirmed cases are unvaccinated children under the age of five. The children have not required hospitalization and are recovering at home.

MDH investigates how individuals become infected, identifies people known to be exposed, monitors them for symptoms and informs them of recommended protective actions. Health officials continue to monitor individuals across the state and update the MDH website regularly with case statistics (see link below).

"Le Sueur County Public Health is working closely with MDH to ensure coordination of resources and information," says Cindy Shaughnessy, RN, PHN, and Director of Le Sueur County Public Health. "We are working collaboratively with MDH and other partners including the South Central Healthcare Coalition and Emergency Management to make sure people have accurate and up to date information regarding the measles outbreak."

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. It is no longer common in the United States due to high immunization levels. Symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes followed by a rash that typically spreads from the head to the rest of the body. A person with measles can pass it on to others 4 days before the rash appears to 4 days after it appears. Measles spreads easily by coughing, sneezing or even being in the same room with someone who has the illness. Measles can be a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death.

Le Sueur County Public Health officials are encouraging people to check their immunization records to make sure they are vaccinated. Measles can spread very easily among unvaccinated people, so the best way to protect yourself and your community is to make sure everyone who is able receives the measles, mumps and rubella or MMR vaccine. You may request vaccination records by calling the MN Immunization Information Connection (MIIC) Record Request Line at 651-201-3980.

MDH is recommending an "accelerated" vaccination schedule for children and adolescents of the two dose MMR series in counties with a confirmed case of measles. Children (12 months and older) and adolescents should have 2 doses of MMR. The first dose is given at 12 months, and with the accelerated schedule can be followed by a second dose 28 days later. Contact your health care provider for additional guidance. **People who need to be vaccinated should contact their health care provider.**

For more information about measles, visit the MDH website at

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/measles/index.html>

There is also a link on the Le Sueur County website at <http://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/>