

Health Alert: Confirmed Cases of Measles, August 18, 2026

ACTION STEPS

Local health departments: *Please forward to hospitals and clinics in your jurisdiction.*

Hospitals and clinics: *Please distribute to infectious disease doctors, infection preventionists, emergency department physicians, intensive care physicians, neurologists, radiologists, primary care providers, and pediatricians.*

SUMMARY

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has confirmed measles in a resident in metro Atlanta. This individual was unvaccinated against measles. At this time, there is no known travel history or exposure to someone infected with measles. DPH is working with the healthcare and childcare facility visited by this individual while they were infectious to identify and notify persons who may have been exposed. This case brings the total number of reported measles cases in Georgia in 2026 to seven.

Nationally, measles activity continues to increase. As of August 13, 2026, a total of 2,566 confirmed measles cases have been reported in the United States (US). Among these, 2,550 measles cases were reported by 47 jurisdictions. Thirty-eight new outbreaks have been identified in 2026, and 94% of confirmed cases (2,407 of 2,566) are outbreak-associated (1,032 from outbreaks starting in 2026 and 1,375 from outbreaks that started in 2025) <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html>. In 2026, 93% of measles cases in the US occurred among individuals who had not received the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine or whose vaccination status was unknown. Therefore, DPH urges healthcare providers to maintain heightened awareness for patients with symptoms compatible with measles and for those who have recently traveled domestically or internationally.

CLINICAL PRESENTATION

Measles is a highly contagious disease spread primarily through aerosolized droplets. The incubation period is typically 10 to 12 days but can range from 4 to 21 days. Measles typically begins with a prodrome of stepwise increasing fever (often as high as 104-105° F) accompanied by cough, coryza, and/or conjunctivitis.

Koplik spots (tiny red spots with bluish-white centers on the buccal mucosa), which are diagnostic for measles, may appear 2-3 days before the rash and fade 1-2 days later. As fever peaks on days 4-5, a maculopapular rash typically appears on the face along the hairline and behind the ears, then spreads downward to the chest, back, and extremities. Within 4-5 days, the rash fades in the same order that it appeared.

REPORTING

Measles is a notifiable disease, and suspect cases should be reported to the Georgia Department of Public Health (O.C.G.A. §31-12-2) **immediately**. Call your local District Health Office or the DPH Acute Disease Epidemiology Section at 404-657-2588 during business hours Monday through Friday, or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) after-hours in the evenings and weekends. Do not await laboratory results before reporting.

LABORATORY TESTING

The preferred method for confirming measles is reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR). Collection of a throat swab (or nasopharyngeal swab) and a urine sample for PCR testing is recommended. In addition to Measles RT-PCR, a serum sample is recommended for measles IgM and IgG testing. To confirm measles, serology should not be performed alone without RT-PCR. Detection of specific IgM antibodies in a serum specimen collected within the first few days of rash onset can provide presumptive evidence of a current or recent measles virus infection.

Collect serum, throat, and urine specimens simultaneously for best results (note: suspect patients should be isolated immediately, see [Actions](#) below). Detailed specimen collection and shipping guidelines are available at the DPH measles website.

After reporting a suspected measles case to the Georgia Department of Public Health, Public Health will assist with specimen collection and laboratory submission if measles testing is warranted. Call your District Health Office or the DPH Acute Disease Epidemiology Section at 404-657-2588 during business hours Monday through Friday, or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) after hours on evenings and weekends. **Please do not send specimens directly to the Georgia Public Health Laboratory (GPHL) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) without prior authorization.**

VACCINATION

The measles-containing vaccine (MMR) remains the most effective for preventing the disease. Ensure patients are up to date with their MMR vaccination. Vaccination is recommended for children at 12 to 15 months of age, with a second dose at 4 to 6 years of age. Documentation of two MMR vaccinations or proof of immunity to measles is required to attend school in Georgia.

ACTIONS REQUESTED FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Consider measles in persons with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible symptoms (cough, coryza, and/or conjunctivitis) and a history of recent international or domestic travel, exposure to international travelers, or exposure to a possible measles case.
- **Isolate persons with suspected measles IMMEDIATELY (negative pressure room, if available). Patients should be managed in a manner that prevents disease spread in the healthcare setting <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions/index.html>**
- Obtain appropriate clinical specimens. Laboratory testing for measles is required to confirm the diagnosis. This includes **throat swabs and urine for measles PCR, and blood for serology testing** (see Laboratory Testing section above)
- Report suspected cases of measles **IMMEDIATELY** by calling your local District Health Office or the DPH Acute Disease Epidemiology Section at 404-657-2588 during business hours Monday through Friday, or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) after-hours on evenings and weekends.
- Ensure patients are up to date on their vaccinations according to the recommended schedules for children and adults.

Georgia DPH Contact Information

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