

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear School Students, Families, and Staff,

With the current measles outbreak in Southeastern Michigan growing quickly, and several measles outbreaks nationwide, the St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) would like to provide some information about this serious disease. SCCHD is committed to protecting the community from vaccine preventable diseases like measles and follows guidelines established by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person; it is passed to others by coughing and sneezing, as well as by contact with a contaminated surface or object. The measles virus will live in the air and on objects for 2 hours, infecting 90% of unprotected people even after the ill person has left the room. Symptoms develop about 7-14 days after exposure, but can take up to 21 days. The first sign of measles is usually a high fever, along with a runny nose, red eyes, cough and sore throat: 3-5 days after these symptoms, a rash will appear that begins on the face and moves down to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. ***If symptoms of measles develop, please do not visit your healthcare provider or emergency room without calling ahead first! It is important that precautions are taken to prevent others from becoming exposed!***

There is no treatment for measles, but there is a way to prevent it: the combination measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. This safe and effective vaccine has been available since 1971. Children need two doses of MMR-one dose at 12-15 months and another dose at 4-6 years. Teens and adults should also be up to date on their MMR vaccination.

It is important to note that even **one case of measles** in a daycare or school will prompt SCCHD to exclude all individuals, including staff and volunteers, who are not protected from measles either through vaccination or previous history of having had the disease. **This exclusion will last for 21 days after the last case has been identified**, as that is the length of time it can take to develop symptoms after exposure to the virus.

We understand the educational and practical challenges of students missing school for several weeks and therefore encourage all families to consider vaccination before exclusion becomes necessary as a disease control measure.

For more information about the MMR vaccine or to find additional information about measles, please see our website at www.scchealth.co. To schedule a vaccination appointment, please contact your healthcare provider or SCCHD at 810-987-5300.

Sincerely,



Annette Mercatante MD, MPH
Medical Health Officer



www.scchealth.co

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