

# Keeping CSU Healthy: A Brief Note about Measles

As of April 29<sup>th</sup> the Cleveland Clinic stated **NO** 2019 measles cases were reported in Ohio. However, in the wake of many reports across the U.S. of measles quarantine activity on several college campuses and the presence of the disease in states near and around Ohio the following is provided for informational purposes, only. **If you think you have contracted the measles or may have been in close contact with someone who has confirmed measles, or any communicable disease please refer quickly to your medical professional or contact CSU Health & Wellness Services at 216-687-3649 M-F 8a-5p to speak with a health care professional.**

Measles is an acute viral disease of the respiratory system. Measles is spread through direct personal contact, or direct contact with respiratory secretions (surface or airborne) with nasal or throat secretions of an infected person. Measles typically begins with a fever, runny nose, cough, drowsiness, irritability, sore throat and red eyes. This is then followed by a rash that spreads across the body of the infected individual-*read more below...*

## How is it transmitted?

Measles transmission is spread primarily by coughing, &/or sneezing. People may also contract measles by touching a contaminated item or surface. (E.g. doorknobs, tables, chairs, water fountains, an infected persons hand, etc.) The virus can live on surfaces or remain in the air for up to 2 hours after the person with measles has left the area. Measles can be transmitted from an infected person 4 days before the onset of the rash and 4 days after the rash onset.

## Signs, symptoms, treatment:

Currently, there is no treatment for measles other than supportive care through relief of symptoms (e.g. pain management). **People with suspected measles should stay at home and away from others for at least 4 days from the onset of the rash.** This is an important prevention strategy to avoid the spread of measles! The infection occurs in sequential stages over a period of two to three weeks. Infection and incubation-First 10-14 days post exposure there may be no signs or symptoms; then watch for fever, dry cough, runny nose, sore throat, inflamed eyes (conjunctivitis), tiny white spots with bluish-white centers on a red background found inside the mouth on the inner lining of the cheek (known as Koplik's spots), a skin rash made up of large, flat blotches that often flow into one another, some are raised and usually occur on the face first then spreads down arms, trunk, thighs, lower legs, and feet.

## 2 Key Risk Factors:

- **Being unvaccinated.** If you haven't received the vaccine for measles, you're likely to develop the disease.
- **Traveling internationally.** If you travel to developing countries where measles is common you're at a higher risk of catching the disease. Consider adding the measles vaccination before you study/travel abroad to any location!

## Prevention:

**Vaccination is the most effective way to protect oneself against measles.** You can still be exposed to the disease through contact with unvaccinated individuals. The easiest thing for students to do is to get the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine, if they have not already received it. You need at least 2 MMR vaccines in your lifetime. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people who were vaccinated **prior to 1968** with an early version of the vaccine, which was made from an inactivated (killed) virus, "**should be revaccinated**" with at least one dose of live attenuated measles vaccine.

## Practice good hygiene:

- Wash hands with MILD SOAP and running water for, at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow.
- Self-isolate if you suspect you have measles-it is highly communicable and spreads readily because it lingers in areas long after an infected person has left the space. Measles can affect you whether you live on or off campus!
- Don't share drinks or eating utensils.
- Regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched (such as game stations, workout and/or sports equipment, doorknobs, tables, counters) with soap and water or with cleaning wipes.
- Use spray or dispense airborne disinfectant products only in accordance with manufacturer provided instructions.

**Helpful Links/Sources:** 1) <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/index.html>; 2) <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/measles/symptoms-causes/syc-20374857>