

DPHHS HAN

Information Sheet



DATE

October 1, 2026

SUBJECT

Measles Case in Fergus County

SUMMARY

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and Fergus County Health Department (FCHD) report a confirmed case of measles that had potential exposures in Montana from September 24 through September 30, 2026.

BACKGROUND

DPHHS is aware of two public locations where the person went in Fergus and Phillips counties. Individuals present at these locations may have been exposed and should monitor for symptoms for 21 days after their last exposure:

- Amtrak Train Station (Malta, MT): Amtrak Train #7 headed westbound from Chicago Union Station, arriving on Thursday, September 24, 2026 at 2:20 pm in Malta.
- Evergreen Wood Products (Moore, MT): Friday, September 25, 2026

The above exposure sites are also available on the Fergus County Health Department website: <https://fergusmt.gov/departments/health-dep>. Any additional new exposure sites will be added when identified.

FCHD is contacting any known individuals who may have been exposed to measles and are providing these individuals with information related to the exposure date and disease symptoms to watch out for.

INFORMATION

Measles outbreaks are presently occurring in multiple locations [throughout the United States](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Clinician Recommendations:

Consider measles as a diagnosis in anyone with fever ($\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$ or 38.3°C) and a generalized maculopapular rash with cough, coryza, or conjunctivitis in individuals who report the following:

- Individuals who report exposure to a case of measles in the previous 21 days, including the exposure locations listed above in Fergus County and Phillips County, and recent exposures in [Flathead County](#) September 8-11, 2026.

- Recent travel to areas in the U.S. with measles cases and/or outbreaks, including trains, or
- Individuals who recently traveled abroad in countries with measles cases.

Please note:

- Some patients may not have a history of travel or visitors; this should not deter clinicians from testing suspected measles cases.
- Some measles cases have reported a “modified” presentation of measles, including a more subtle rash that some describe as resembling “pimples” and other reduced symptoms. This presentation is more common in persons who are partially or fully vaccinated for measles.
- Any person reporting an exposure to measles should be monitored for 21 days (28 days if immune globulin was given) for signs and symptoms of measles illness.

When a clinician suspects a diagnosis of measles, there are several key steps to prevent ongoing transmission, as noted below:

- **Isolate:** Do not allow patients with suspected measles to remain in the waiting room or other common areas of a health care facility; isolate patients with suspected measles immediately, ideally in a single-patient airborne infection isolation room (AIIR), if available, or in a private room with a closed door until an AIIR is available. Health care providers should be adequately protected against measles and should adhere to standard and airborne precautions when evaluating suspect cases, regardless of their vaccination status. Offer testing outside of facilities to avoid transmission in health care settings. Call ahead to ensure immediate isolation for patients referred to hospitals for a higher level of care. See [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Measles in Healthcare Settings](#) for more details.
- **Notify:** Immediately notify your [local or tribal health department](#) or the DPHHS Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section (CDEpi) at the **24-hour Epi On Call phone number (406-444-0273)** about any suspected case of measles to ensure rapid testing and investigation.
- **Test:** Follow the Montana Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL) testing recommendations. **MTPHL is the only laboratory in the state that can perform a measles PCR test.** To send a specimen to MTPHL, collect a respiratory specimen (either throat, nasopharyngeal, or nasal Dacron swabs in viral transport media) for reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) from all patients with clinical features compatible with measles. PCR is the preferred test and should be collected after rash onset. If rash has been present for at least 4 days, providers should also collect a blood specimen for serology testing (1 – 2 ml of serum) in addition to the specimens for PCR testing. Specimens can be transported by [courier](#), UPS, or FedEx to MTPHL in Helena. Given potential shortages in IgM test kits, providers should be vigilant in **contacting MTPHL at 1-800-821-7284** for guidance on testing.
- **Manage:** Provide appropriate measles post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to eligible individuals as soon as possible after exposure to close contacts without evidence of immunity, either with MMR (within 72 hours) or immunoglobulin (within six days). The choice of PEP is based on elapsed time from exposure or medical contraindications to vaccination.
- **Vaccinate:** The best way to protect against measles is vaccination. No changes have been made to the existing measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine recommendations in the United States. Schools, early childhood education providers, and health care providers should work to ensure students and families are current with MMR vaccine.

MMR Vaccine Recommendations:

- Children are routinely recommended to receive two doses of MMR vaccines. Children should receive their first dose of MMR at age 12 to 15 months and their second dose at four to six years.

- Unvaccinated children and adolescents are recommended to receive two age-appropriate doses of MMR vaccine.
- Unvaccinated adults may need one or two doses of MMR vaccine, depending on their circumstances, if they do not have evidence of immunity. Persons born before 1957 are considered to have presumed immunity.
- Special circumstances may warrant additional MMR vaccine schedule considerations, including domestic travel to areas experiencing a measles outbreak, international travel, and working in health care settings.
- MMR doses should be separated **by at least 28 days**.

Recommendations for Local and Tribal Health Departments

Measles is an immediately notifiable disease. Call the CDEpi 24-hour Epi On Call phone number (406-444-0273) to report any suspected case of measles to ensure rapid testing and case investigation. DPHHS will report measles cases to CDC.

- Work closely with CDEpi to coordinate specimen collection and testing at MTPHL.
- If highly suspected or confirmed measles is identified, conduct active surveillance for additional (secondary) cases and facilitate transportation of specimens immediately to confirm diagnosis.
- If highly suspected or confirmed measles is identified, identify exposed individuals and assess their measles immunity status. Work closely with CDEpi to implement control measures and monitoring, including potential recommendations for post-exposure prophylaxis.
- Record and report details about cases of measles, including adherence to recommended precautions and facility location(s) of index and secondary cases.
- Enhance outreach and communications to under-vaccinated communities in your jurisdiction through trusted messengers.

Recommendations for Public

Keep up to date with recommended vaccinations. Anyone who is exposed to measles and has not had 2 doses of MMR should contact their medical provider to evaluate if you should receive an MMR immediately or another medication called Immune Globulin for high-risk persons.

If you or a family member are experiencing symptoms of measles, please isolate at home unless you are seeking medical care. Please call ahead to the medical facility if you are able to, this will help prevent additional people from getting sick with measles.

Measles can be serious with dangerous complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis (brain swelling), and rarely even death. Your best protection against measles is with vaccination with the MMR vaccine. It is safe and effective for anyone 1 year and older. Talk to your medical provider or public health department about getting vaccinated to protect your family.