

MLS Laboratory Update: Measles Cases in Twin Cities Area and Laboratory Testing

JUNE 03, 2025

Purpose of this Message:

To inform clinical laboratory partners of two new measles cases in the metro area and provide instructions on acceptable specimens, transport media and shipping conditions for testing at MDH-PHL.

Action Item:

- Please review the information below and share with your clinical laboratory partners.

Laboratory Testing Information:

The MDH Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) offers a real-time reverse transcriptase PCR assay for measles testing. Real-time PCR is the preferred diagnostic assay due to cross-reactivity with the serology test. It is important to collect specimens as soon as possible after the onset of the rash. Considering day 0 as the rash onset date, collect specimens as outlined below:

- Day 0 – 5 of rash: throat swab
- Day 6 – 9 of rash: throat swab and urine

Requests for measles IgM serologies should be sent to your regular reference lab; serology requests received at MDH-PHL for measles IgM serology are forwarded to CDC and may result in slower test reporting.

Acceptable specimens:

- Throat swab (preferred), nasal/nasopharyngeal swab or nasal washing submitted in a viral transport media (VTM): universal transport medium (UTM), M5, M4, Minimum Essential Medium (MEM), saline, balanced salt solution (BSS), Sterile isotonic solutions, Phosphate buffered saline (PBS), Liquid Stuart's Medium.
- Urine (10 – 40 mL) should be collected and shipped in a sterile urine container.

Transport:

In order to obtain same-day results, specimens must arrive at MDH-PHL before 10:30 AM.

Store and ship specimens at refrigeration temperature (2 - 8°C) on ice packs in an insulated container. Further information on collection, transport media and shipping can be found on the [MDH Measles Lab Testing web page](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/hcp/labtesting.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/hcp/labtesting.html>).

Background:

Two additional cases of measles have been identified in Minnesota. One case is an adult with an unknown vaccination status who was exposed during domestic air travel. The other case is an unvaccinated child with unknown exposure. Cases reside in Washington and Dakota County, respectively and are unrelated. MDH is working with local health departments to contact those who were known to be exposed to either case. One case was at the theme park at Mall of America while infectious. Persons who were at the mall on May 24 between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. may have been exposed and should be aware of any symptoms that develop between **May 31 and June 14**. A list of measles symptoms is available on the [MDH measles web page \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/measlesfacts.html#symptoms\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/measlesfacts.html#symptoms)

These cases bring Minnesota's case count to 4 for 2025.

Nationally measles continues to increase. As of May 29th, a total of 1,088 confirmed measles cases have been reported by 33 jurisdictions throughout the United States in 2025 ([CDC: Measles Cases and Outbreaks \(www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/))

It is important to assess MMR vaccination status at every clinic visit and recall those who have previously refused MMR vaccine. MMR vaccine remains the most important tool for preventing measles and the current measles situation is an opportunity to restart conversations with patients about the importance of vaccination.

This information was shared with clinicians and infection preventionists through the Health Alert issued by [MDH Health Alert Network \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/han\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/han).

Questions:

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5200.