



Media Information

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Measles identified in Yellowstone County child

Billings, MT – Yellowstone County Public Health officials have identified a highly suspect case of measles in a school-aged Yellowstone County child who visited a local healthcare facility on Friday, July 18. The child had recently traveled with their family to an area where measles is spreading.

The child's symptoms included fever, runny nose, red and watery eyes, rash, and spots in the mouth. The child is unvaccinated. Medical providers have sent a throat swab and a blood sample to the Montana State Laboratory for confirmation of the diagnosis.

The child attended a Vacation Bible school in Billings while contagious July 14-16. Officials have a list of all attendees and are working to contact all the staff, volunteers and families who attended the camp. The child and their family are currently quarantining at home.

- If you are unvaccinated and exposed to measles, it is highly recommended that you quarantine in your home for 21 days so you do not expose others.
- If you are vaccinated and exposed to measles, monitor for symptoms for 21 days. If you develop symptoms, please call your medical provider before seeking medical attention.
- Everyone 6 months and older who has been exposed is eligible for the MMR vaccine.

“The best protection against measles is the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine,” said Dr. Megan Littlefield, Yellowstone County deputy health officer. “This vaccine has been proven safe and effective at preventing disease and lessening major complications from this virus.”

MMR vaccines will be available for anyone 12 months and older who are not symptomatic at RiverStone Health Clinic, 123 South 27th Street in Billings on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The vaccine is covered by insurance or available at no cost if not insured. Vaccines can also be scheduled at the RiverStone Health Immunization Clinic Monday-Friday by calling 406.247.3382 or online at RiverStoneHealth.org/Immunizations.

This is an evolving situation, and as more information becomes available, updates will be posted on RiverStoneHealth.org/Measles and the RiverStone Health Facebook page.

Measles is very contagious. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been. This can happen even up to 2 hours after that person has left. It is so contagious that if one person has it, 9 out of 10 people around that person will also become infected if not vaccinated. An infected person can spread measles before he or she develops symptoms – from four days before developing the measles rash through four days afterward.

Seven to 21 days after exposure to measles, an infected person will develop a fever and soon after, a cough, runny nose and red eyes. Within a few days after the initial symptoms, tiny white spots inside the mouth may appear, and then a rash of small red spots begins on the face spreading downward to the rest of the body. The rash can last for a week and coughing can last for 10 days.

Because measles is highly contagious, it is highly recommended that anyone who is not vaccinated and thinks they may have been exposed stay home and call their healthcare provider for further information about testing and how to avoid exposing others.

For more information, go to RiverStoneHealth.org/Measles or call 406.247.3396.

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