

2nd case of measles confirmed

BY MELISSA PATRICK
Kentucky Health News

Public health officials continue to urge Kentuckians to ensure their children are immunized against measles, as they announced the state's second confirmed measles case in 2025.

The case was a child who was traveling through the state when they sought treatment, according to a news release. The child, who is not a U.S. resident, was diagnosed at a health care facility in Kentucky, which is why the case is counted as a Kentucky incident.

The Kentucky Department for Public Health says the health care facility adhered to strict safety protocols, thus eliminating the risk of spread to other patients.

"There are no other cases and no risks of exposure to Kentuckians associated with this case," according to the release.

A Cabinet for Health and Family Services spokeswoman told the Kentucky Lantern Friday that the child was "unvaccinated, school-aged and is no longer in Kentucky."

The first case of measles in Kentucky in 2025 was reported in February. This case occurred in a resident who had recently traveled internationally to an area with ongoing measles transmission. The state health department reports there were no other confirmed cases associated with the February measles case.

Measles could become endemic again

Kentucky's latest case of measles comes as new research from Stanford University, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that "at current state-level vaccination rates, measles may become endemic again" in two decades, meaning it would become a common disease again.

Further, the study estimated there would be 11.1 million



A second case of measles was recently confirmed in Kentucky. (Photo sourced from Kentucky Health News)

cases of measles over the next 25 years if vaccination rates for the disease drop 10% and 51.2 million cases over the next 25 years if childhood vaccination rates were cut in half.

The estimates are based on a simulation of what would happen in the U.S. under various vaccination rates for children.

The researchers add that small declines in measles vaccination would cause this to happen more quickly, whereas small increases in vaccine coverage would prevent this.

Senior author Dr. Nathan Lo, assistant professor of infectious diseases at Stanford Medicine, encouraged parents who aren't sure about vaccination to discuss this with their health care provider.

"With measles, we're right on the cusp. Increasing vaccination levels by just 5% brings the number of measles cases down, safely away from returning to endemic levels," Lo said in a news release. "These are the kinds of small percentages

that can really be a tipping point. It's empowering that a small segment of the population can make a difference here."

Sub-header: State's kindergarten vaccine rates drop

The most recent assessment of Kentucky kindergarten vaccines for the 2024-2025 school year, released Thursday, April 24, shows immunization coverage for all vaccines has dropped to the lowest rates in more than seven years for Kentucky kindergartners, including the measles vaccine.

"Coverage among kindergartners for the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, which is effective at preventing diseases, including measles, and is legally required for school attendance in Kentucky, has dropped to 86.9%, which is lower than the national average of 93%. By comparison, MMR rates for Kentucky kindergartners were at 90% for the 2023-2024 school year," according to the release.

This decline in MMR vaccine coverage is occurring during the largest outbreak of measles in the U.S. since measles was declared eliminated in the country in 2000, according to the release.

As of April 24, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported 884 measles cases in 30 states in 2025, with 97% of the cases in unvaccinated people — and the numbers continue to grow. For comparison, there were only 285 measles cases reported in the U.S. in 2024.

"These are concerning trends that we are seeing," said Dr. Steven Stack, the state's public health commissioner. "It is really important that folks are properly informed about vaccines so they can take safe steps to protect their children. Vaccines are safe and effective. We urge all parents to have their children vaccinated to ensure they are protected from preventable diseases like measles."


Measles is a highly contagious respiratory virus that can cause serious health complications, especially in young children. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can survive for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area.

Early symptoms of measles include high fever, cough, runny nose and red/watery eyes. A measles rash typically appears three to five days after the symptoms begin, usually on the face before spreading down the rest of the body.

Measles is so contagious that if one person has measles, up to nine out of 10 people nearby will become infected if they are not vaccinated, according to the CDC.


The two-dose MMR vaccine is recommended for children at 12 to 15 months old and then at 4 to 6 years old. The CDC says two doses of MMR vaccine is 97% effective against measles.

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