



Measles (Rubeola)

Measles Elimination

The United States has maintained measles elimination status for almost 20 years.

While we expect importations of measles cases into the United States to continue, **the risk for measles for the majority of the population would still remain low.** That is because most people in the United States are vaccinated against measles.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines measles elimination as “the absence of endemic measles virus transmission in a defined geographical area (e.g. region or country) for at least 12 months in the presence of a surveillance system that has been verified to be performing well.” In 2000, measles was declared eliminated from the United States. That means the disease is no longer constantly present in this country. However, travelers continue to bring measles into the United States, and it can sometimes spread and cause outbreaks among people who are not vaccinated. If a measles outbreak continues for a year or more, the United States could lose its measles elimination status.

The U.S. will continue to detect and respond to measles cases

Measles outbreaks continue to occur in countries around the world so there is always a risk of measles importations into the U.S.

- When measles is imported into a community with a highly vaccinated population, outbreaks either don't happen or are usually small.

Eliminating measles in the U.S. was a historic achievement

Achieving measles elimination status and maintaining it for 19 years is a historic public health achievement.

- The best thing you can do to protect yourself and your community is to make sure you and all of your loved ones get vaccinated on time according to [CDC's routine immunization schedule](#).
- Achieving and maintaining elimination status has been a major undertaking. It has required a significant investment of people, time, and resources. (See [Measles Epidemiology in the United States](#) [. J Infect Dis](#) 2004; 189(Suppl 1) May 2004: S1–90 and [Elimination of Endemic Measles, Rubella, and Congenital Rubella Syndrome From the Western Hemisphere](#) [. JAMA Pediatr.](#) 2014;168(2):148-155). Reestablishing elimination status would take time and resources.
- However, there won't be any economic, political, or practical penalties for losing elimination. Losing measles elimination would have no adverse implications for the immunization program, its funding, or access of America's children to vaccination either in the private sector or through the federally funded Vaccines for Children Program.

The measles vaccine protects you and your community

Children should be vaccinated on schedule with MMR vaccine.



- CDC recommends getting vaccinated with two doses of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine according to the [routine immunization schedule](#). **If you're traveling internationally**, you should make sure everyone in your family is fully vaccinated against measles before departure.
- Recommendations for infants traveling internationally have not changed. Infants (6 through 11 months old) should receive 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as the first dose in the routine childhood vaccination series.

During an outbreak of measles, public health authorities might recommend an early dose of MMR for infants 6–11 months old who live in, or are traveling to, communities in the U.S. where there is ongoing, community-wide transmission of measles. They may also recommend a second dose of MMR for children 1–4 years of age, and/or adults who previously only received one dose, depending on the age of the affected population. Check the local health department's website for specific recommendations.