

# How to stay safe during the measles outbreak



Health experts say that even one dose of vaccine could prevent the contraction of measles. *Photo courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control*

Clark County is experiencing an outbreak of measles. While the college has not identified any confirmed cases on campus at this time, we want to prepare our community members in the most proactive manner possible, and let you know about the steps you can take to protect yourself, your loved ones, and the Clark College community.

As of today, the current number of confirmed cases in Clark County is reported to be 63. On January 25, Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency in all counties.

- Recommendations from the Clark County Department of Public Health
- What would happen if a confirmed case of measles was discovered at Clark College
- If you are exposed to measles elsewhere
- How to stay informed

# Recommendations

Here are recommendations from the Clark County Department of Public Health:

- Locate your vaccination records – specifically for MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
  - This may include documentation of blood titer tests (proving immunity)
  - If you are unsure of your vaccination status, contact your health provider
- If you are not protected, **get the MMR vaccination as soon as possible**. While not perfect, a single dose of the vaccine is 93 percent effective in protecting against measles; two doses are 97 percent effective. Importantly, getting even just the first dose of the vaccine now will prevent you from being excluded from the college, should a measles case be discovered here.
  - Those with health insurance should check with their health care provider to learn if your plan covers the cost of vaccines.
  - Students can get the vaccine at cost (\$70 per dose) at our Counseling and Health Center in the Health Sciences Building (HSC) room 124. If cost is a concern, please contact the Counseling and Health Center to discuss available options.
- Stay home if you are sick; pay attention to fevers
  - Symptoms of measles are:
    - Runny nose
    - Coughing
    - Conjunctivitis (red, itchy eyes)
    - Fever
    - Rash
  - Most of these symptoms may begin before the rash, and you are contagious as soon as any of these symptoms begin
- If you believe you may have measles symptoms, or develop

symptoms:

- Stay home
- Avoid public spaces if possible
- Call your doctor (do not sit in waiting rooms)
- If you have questions about vaccine efficacy or your own personal health risks, please contact your health care provider for advice.

## **If measles is discovered at Clark College**

While there are still no confirmed cases at Clark College at this time, the outbreak's spread does bring up the question of what would happen if a case was discovered here.

If a case of measles was confirmed at a college location, Clark County Public Health could determine that any individual who was exposed and could not prove immunity would be excluded from the college for up to 21 days. (This process is called an "exclusion.") The college is working on details regarding how to keep students subject to an exclusion in class remotely (where appropriate) and how employees would report leave. However, the most effective way to prevent being part of an exclusion is **to proactively find your record of immunity and, if you do not have immunity, to get vaccinated as soon as possible.** (See Recommendations section above for more information.)

## **If you are exposed to measles outside of Clark College**

Any individual who has been notified that they are part of a measles-exposure exclusion and who does not have documented proof of immunity to measles should consult with their health care provider for guidance. Students who do not have a health care provider may contact the college's Counseling and Health Center.

If a measles-exposure exclusion prevents someone from visiting Clark College locations, they should alert their instructor and/or supervisor. The college is examining options to allow excluded individuals to continue their studies and/or employment during an exclusion.

## **How to stay informed**

If Clark College is notified of a confirmed case of measles at a college location, further communication will be shared via your Clark College email account. Depending on advice from Clark County Public Health, the college may also send alerts via our RAVE Alert system, the college's home page, and our Alerts web page.

Anyone

with questions about measles infection or the measles vaccine should call their

primary care provider or their local county health department:

- Clark County Public Health, 360.397.8021
- Skamania County Public Health, 509.427.3850
- Klickitat County Public Health, 509.773.4565
- Multnomah County Public Health, 503.988.3406
- Washington County Public Health, 503.846.3594
- Clackamas County Public Health, 503.655.8411

## **Some helpful links with more information**

Clark County Public Health Latest Measles Updates:

<https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/measles-investigation>

Measles Basic Info Sheet

(available in multiple languages):

[https://www.clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/dept/files/public-health/CD/Resources/Measles\\_Basic\\_Info\\_english.pdf](https://www.clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/dept/files/public-health/CD/Resources/Measles_Basic_Info_english.pdf)

CDC Measles FAQs:

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/faqs.html#am>

*This article will continue to be updated as the college receives new information. It was last updated on Feb. 21, 2019.*