

# AMHERST COLLEGE

## Measles Information

### Cases of Measles

- As of February 27, 2015, there have been over 170 reported cases of measles in 17 states and the District of Columbia, including 3 in New York and 1 each in both New Jersey (Princeton University) and Pennsylvania.
  - The majority of those cases were persons who contracted the illness because they were either unvaccinated or were not sure if they had received either one or both of the needed inoculations.

**Measles** is a very contagious respiratory virus that lives in the nose and throat. It begins with a fever and produces a rash of tiny red spots.

### Transmission

- Measles are transmitted through the air by an infected person who coughs or sneezes. Unless protected by proper inoculation, 90% of those around the infected person will become ill.
- Measles can spread within a room, even two hours after the contagious person has left, and
- Infected persons can spread measles to others even before they develop the actual signs and symptoms, from 4 days before they develop the rash until 4 days after.
- Typically the virus lasts 1 – 2 weeks

### Signs and Symptoms

- High Fever (>104°F)
- Cough
- Rash, which starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body
- Red, watery eyes
- Runny Nose

Additional complications from measles might include diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis and in rare cases, death. People who are more at risk would include; children under 5, adults over 20, women who are pregnant, and persons with compromised immune systems.

### Exposure

If you believe you might have been exposed to the measles, or you develop the signs and symptoms that include the fever, rash and other measles related concerns, **contact your primary care provider**, and isolate yourself from others.

- Amherst College students should contact Amherst College Health Services by phone
  - (413) 542-2267 – Regular Business Hours (M-F) 8:30am – 5:00pm
  - (413) 577-5000 – UMass/Amherst (after hours)

### Treatment

There is no cure for measles. Treatment is limited to managing the symptoms, making the patient more comfortable.

### Prevention

Vaccination, typically the Measles-Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is the best way to prevent getting and spreading the measles virus.

- Children should be vaccinated at 12 – 15 months, and 4 – 6 years of age
- Adults over 12 years of age, who were born after 1956, and have not yet received their vaccine should do so
  - Adults born between **1957** and **1970** must acquire the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot, which was not provided during those years.

### Travel

For those who are planning on traveling abroad, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all U.S. residents older than 6 months be protected from measles and receive their MMR vaccine, if needed, before departure.

### Additional Information

- <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/fs-parents.html>
- <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/measles.pdf>