

Sample Letter to Parents with Information about Measles

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The United States is seeing the greatest number of people with measles since the disease was declared eliminated from the country in 2000. So far this year, as of June 6, 2019, Vermont has not had any cases of measles, but there have been cases in neighboring states and Quebec. Measles is one of the most contagious of all diseases and it can be disruptive and dangerous.

Measles Outbreaks in the U.S.

The majority of people getting measles are unvaccinated children. Because measles is still common in many parts of the world, unvaccinated travelers continue to bring the disease into the U.S. It can then spread, particularly in communities where groups of people are not vaccinated.

Ensure your child is up to date on their immunizations.

The best way to be protected against measles is with a vaccine that provides protection against three diseases: measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). To make sure your child is protected from measles, the Vermont Department of Health recommends you do the following:

- Make sure your child has had two doses of the MMR vaccine.
- Call your child's primary care provider to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated if needed. If uninsured, your child may be vaccinated at your District Health Office.
- Share updated immunization information with your child's school nurse or administrator.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Call your child's health care provider if your child shows symptoms of measles:

- High fever
- Cough, runny nose and red eyes
- Three to five days after the fever, a rash of tiny, red spots. The rash starts on the face at the hairline and spreads to the rest of the body.

How does measles spread?

Measles spreads through the air when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs or sneezes. Measles is so contagious that an unvaccinated person can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been up to two hours after that person has left the room.

Someone with measles is contagious from four days before the rash appears to four days after the rash appears. Before someone even knows they're sick, they can spread measles to other people.

Is measles serious?

For some children, measles can lead to diarrhea, ear infection, pneumonia (a serious lung infection), lifelong brain damage, a suppressed immune system, deafness, and in rare cases, death.

Thank you for doing your part to protect the health and wellbeing of the children in our community.

Learn more at healthvermont.gov/measles
