



April 26, 2024

To: Burnett County School District Parents and Guardians

The United States is currently experiencing an increase in measles cases and outbreaks. Your school district is utilizing this Burnett County Public Health letter to provide some information about measles and how to prevent it.

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. It is one of the most easily spread diseases known. Symptoms usually begin with a cough, runny nose, high fever, and red, watery eyes. A couple of days later, small, white spots may appear inside the mouth, followed by a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the neck, torso, and limbs. **Measles can be severe, especially in babies and children ages under 5. It can lead to lifelong brain damage, deafness, and even death.** Measles can cause a weakening of the immune system, lasting from weeks to years.

As of today, April 28, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports the following for the United States:

- There have been **125 cases of measles**. In 2023, there was a total of 58 cases.
- There have been **seven outbreaks** (3 cases or more). In 2023, there were a total of 4 outbreaks.
- **83% of cases were unvaccinated**. 13% of cases received one MMR vaccine. 5% of cases received two MMR vaccine doses. 24% of vaccination status is unknown.
- **46% of cases were under five years of age**. 22% were 5 to 19 years of age. 40% of cases were 20+ years of age.
- **68 of the 125 cases were hospitalized (54%)**, with 65% of those hospitalizations occurring in those under five years of age, 36% in those 5 to 19 years old, and 53% in those 20+ years old.

As of April 26, 2024 Wisconsin Department of Health Services reports that there has been one confirmed case of Measles in Wisconsin. This case has ties to Dane and Rock Counties.

Up to **9** in 10 people who lack immunity to **measles** and are close to an infected person will become infected



There is no cure for measles. Two doses of the MMR vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) provide the best protection against disease. The MMR vaccine is recommended routinely in two doses. The first dose is between 12-15 months of age, and the second dose is between 4-6 years of age. In most cases, those who did not receive two doses of the MMR vaccine following this recommended schedule can still get vaccinated.

Burnett County has low vaccination rates among young residents for the MMR vaccine. If measles outbreaks happen in Wisconsin, residents of Burnett County may be at an increased risk. As of April 26, 2024, ONLY 66% of children under 24 months in Burnett County have received their first in the series of two MMR immunizations. Please check your child's immunization records to ensure they are up-to-date on the MMR vaccine following the recommended schedule. View your child's immunization records by logging into the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) Public Immunization Record Access. Burnett County Public Health can assist if you have trouble accessing your child's immunization records.

If your child needs the MMR vaccine and you have health insurance, please call your local healthcare provider.

If your child does not have health insurance, is underinsured, is American Indian or Alaska Native, or has BadgerCare, please contact Burnett Medical Center or Webster Health as they are a part of the Vaccines for Children Program and are able to help update your child(ren) with vaccine needs.

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