



Public Health

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HEALTH UPDATE

West Texas Measles Outbreak Declared Over

This health alert is intended for physicians, clinicians, infection control and prevention practitioners, and laboratory staff in Tarrant County.

Key Message:

- Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has officially declared the West Texas measles outbreak over as of August 18, 2025, after 42+ days with no new reported cases.
- Final outbreak totals: 762 confirmed cases, 99 hospitalizations (13%), and 2 deaths in school-aged children since late January 2025.
- Healthcare providers should remain vigilant and continue to test for measles if patients present with compatible symptoms, as ongoing outbreaks exist in North America and globally.
- Tarrant County reported 4 cases of measles in 2025, with no known association to the West Texas outbreak.

Situational Summary

The following information is based on the August 18, 2025 statement from the Texas Department of State Health Services:

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) announced Monday, August 18, 2025, that the West Texas measles outbreak has officially ended. Public health professionals consider a measles outbreak over after 42 days with no new cases because that is double the disease's maximum incubation period, or the longest time it can take between when a person is exposed to the virus and when they get sick.

Since the outbreak began in late January 2025, a total of 762 cases of measles were confirmed in Texas, with more than two-thirds of those cases occurring in children. Ninety-nine people (13%) were hospitalized over the course of the outbreak, and there were two fatalities in school-aged children. More than 94% of cases occurred in individuals who were unvaccinated or had unknown vaccination status.

"I want to highlight the tireless work of the public health professionals across the state who contributed to the containment of one of the most contagious viruses," said DSHS Commissioner Jennifer A. Shuford, MD, MPH. "We arrived at this point through a

comprehensive outbreak response that included testing, vaccination, disease monitoring and educating the public about measles through awareness campaigns. I also want to recognize the many health care professionals who identified and treated cases of a virus that most providers had never seen in person before this outbreak."

The outbreak was centered primarily in Gaines County in West Texas, with cases eventually spreading to over 35 counties in Texas, including the North Texas area. The outbreak contributed to making 2025 the year with the highest number of measles cases in the United States since 1992.

Background

Measles is one of the most contagious infectious diseases, with one infected person potentially infecting 12-18 susceptible individuals. The virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets and can remain infectious in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. The disease can cause serious complications including pneumonia, encephalitis, and death, particularly in young children and immunocompromised individuals.

The best protection against measles is vaccination with two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, which is 97% effective at preventing the disease. DSHS and CDC recommend children receive their first MMR dose at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age.

Recommendations For Healthcare Providers

- **Continued Vigilance:** Although the Texas outbreak has ended, healthcare providers should continue to:
 - Consider measles in patients presenting with fever $\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$ (38.3°C) AND generalized maculopapular rash lasting ≥ 3 days AND cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis, or Koplik spots, particularly in patients with:
 - Recent international travel
 - Contact with known measles cases
 - Unvaccinated status
- **Immediately isolate** suspected cases using airborne precautions in a negative pressure room when possible
- **Test promptly** using RT-PCR (throat or nasopharyngeal swab) and measles IgM serology
- **Report immediately** to Tarrant County Public Health at 817-321-5350 while the patient is present to facilitate testing and investigation
- **Verify vaccination status** for all patients and offer MMR vaccine to those who are not up to date

Infection Control

Healthcare facilities should ensure all staff have documented evidence of measles immunity through vaccination records, laboratory titers, or birth before 1957. During any future measles activity, exclude unvaccinated healthcare workers from day 5-21 after exposure.





Public Health Implications

While this outbreak has ended, DSHS emphasizes that the threat of measles remains due to ongoing outbreaks in North America and globally. Additional cases are likely to occur in Texas this year, particularly among travelers with one or no doses of vaccine who are returning from areas with active transmission.

Maintaining high two-dose MMR vaccination coverage ($\geq 95\%$) in communities remains the most effective strategy for preventing future outbreaks and protecting vulnerable populations, including infants too young to be vaccinated and immunocompromised individuals.

For More Information:

- CDC Measles Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/>
- Texas DSHS Measles Resources: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/measles>
- TCPH Disease Reporting: 817-321-5350

	Alert:	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention
	Advisory:	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
	Update:	Provides update information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
	Information:	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

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