



# *CITY of NORTHAMPTON*

## **PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the measles outbreak linked to Disneyland continues to spread throughout the United States, the Northampton Health Department is deeply concerned for those who are at risk because they have not been vaccinated.

The current measles outbreak is a multi-state outbreak affecting 17 states with a total of 121 confirmed cases. Though Massachusetts has not been implicated in this outbreak as of yet, our concern is that many Massachusetts residents may have traveled to Maricopa County, Arizona, where there is an outbreak, to watch the Super Bowl or partake in festivities.

Vaccines are one of the most important ways parents can protect their children from very real diseases that exist in our world. The measles vaccine is very effective. One dose of measles vaccine is about 93% effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus and two doses is about 97% effective. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly urges parents to make sure that their children have received the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine soon as your child reaches the recommended age. However, **it is not too late** to get your child caught up so they can receive the vaccine and be fully protected.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease that spreads easily through the air or on infected surfaces. The virus that causes measles lives in the nose and throat and is sprayed into the air when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks. The virus can linger in the air for up to two hours and then be transmitted to people by inhaling as they pass by.

Symptoms of measles appear 10 to 14 days after exposure and often look and feels like a cold or flu. A cough, high fever, runny nose and red watery eyes are common. A few days later, a red, blotchy rash starts typically on the face then spreads to the rest of the body. People with measles are contagious 4 days before the rash begins until 4 days after the rash onset.

**Measles is a vaccine preventable disease.** Vaccination will not only protect you and your loved ones from disease, but high vaccination rates in a community will help protect those who cannot be vaccinated, including infants under 12 months of age.

For more information on measles, visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) or contact the Northampton Health Department (413)587-1216.

Sincerely,

**Merridith A. O'Leary**

Merridith A. O'Leary, R.S.  
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# Measles Cases and Outbreaks

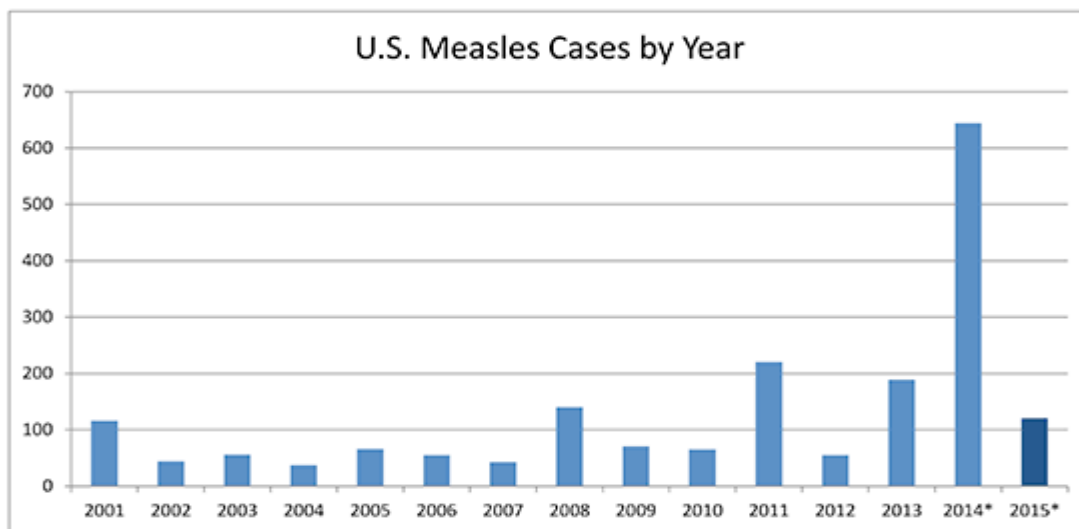
January 1 to February 6, 2015\*

**121**  
Cases

reported in 17 states and Washington DC: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington

**1**  
Outbreak

representing 85% of reported cases this year



\*Provisional data reported to CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases



Q: WHY HAVE THERE BEEN MORE MEASLES CASES IN THE UNITED STATES IN RECENT YEARS?

A: In 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2014, there were more reported measles cases compared with previous years. CDC experts attribute this to:

- more measles cases than usual in some countries to which Americans often travel (such as England, France, Germany, India, the Philippines and Vietnam), and therefore more measles cases coming into the US, and/or
- more spreading of measles in U.S. communities with pockets of unvaccinated people.