

01/30/2019

## Grant County Health District response to Governor Inslee's declaration of emergency due to current measles outbreak

Dear parent/legal guardian, staff member or other school visitors,

As many of you may know Governor Inslee recently declared a public health emergency in all Washington state counties due to the measles outbreak in Clark and King County. The spread of the disease beyond that region is likely to occur, especially to areas that have less than 95% of their population immune to measles. The measles disease can be much more serious than other diseases that have vaccines available. Grant County schools are taking measures to ensure that proper documentation of immunity or legal exemption are on file, so that we are better prepared to protect our community if measles is identified here.

Should a measles outbreak occur in Grant County, in your place of work or at school, any staff, students or others without evidence of immunity would be **immediately excluded from any school and/or congregate setting and this would continue until at least 21 days after the last known case.** A measles outbreak can persist for many months. Please understand that children and adults with a legal exemption to MMR vaccine and without a proof of immunity would also face exclusion. To prevent this from occurring, please provide your school with one of the following evidences of immunity now:

1. Date of birth before 1957 (consider a blood titer to ensure immune status).
2. Record of age-appropriate measles vaccination with a live measles virus-containing vaccine: one dose for children 12 months through 3 years old; two doses for anyone 4 years and older; one dose for adults (2<sup>nd</sup> dose would be required during an outbreak), verified by a licensed health care provider.
3. A letter from a licensed health care provider documenting infection with and full recovery from previous measles illness (a blood titer could still be needed in an outbreak).
4. A letter from a licensed health care provider that confirms a blood test or serology showing measles immunity.

Since the measles vaccine is prohibited in pregnant women, we recommend that pregnant women who are not immune talk to their health care provider about potential exposure to measles.

The time to take action is now. The availability of vaccine and blood titers may be delayed if there is a high volume of people trying to get it at the same time. An outbreak is less likely to occur if most of the population is immune to the disease. There are many immunocompromised individuals that cannot receive the vaccine and are depending on those around them to be immune. They are more vulnerable to having severe complications and even death.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your school, your health care provider or the Grant County Health District (509-766-7960). Additional information regarding measles is available at the following link, <http://granthealth.org/measles/>

Thank you for your attention.



Alexander Brzezny MD, MPH  
Grant County Health Officer

CC: Theresa Adkinson, GCHD Administrator  
CC: Grant County Board of Health