

# **MEASLES- UPDATE**

The large number of measles cases in the United States since early January 2015 is concerning and stresses the importance of vaccinations. Media coverage has been reporting and covering outbreak areas and sadly the subsequent illness, disease complications and deaths.

I am monitoring reported statistics with both the Columbia/Boone County and Randolph County Health Departments and through the Missouri Department of Health. The good news is that at this time, in the State of Missouri -  
**THERE ARE NO REPORTED CASES OF MEASLES.**

Measles was declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000 as a result of the high two (2) dose measles vaccine coverage. Sadly with increased immigration across borders, travel and an increasing number of unvaccinated individuals in our country, measles outbreaks are returning and recurring. Measles is still endemic (causing outbreaks) in European countries (France, The United Kingdom, Spain and Switzerland), Africa, India and the Philippines.

Measles is a highly contagious, acute, viral illness that is transmitted by contact with an infected person. Measles virus is spread through coughing and sneezing and touching contaminated surfaces. Exposed individuals (patients) are considered contagious from 4 days before and until 4 days after the rash (measles “spots”) appears. After an infected person leaves a location, the virus remains contagious for up to two (2) hours on surfaces and in the air. Measles can cause severe complications including pneumonia, encephalitis and death.

This is a good opportunity for adults and parents to review not only their student’s immunization records, but their own immunity. Adults born before 1956 are considered immune - “presumptively immune”. And, adults who had measles as a child do not need to be vaccinated in most cases. Children should receive a first dose of MMR vaccine at age 12 to 15 months, and a second dose between the ages of 4 to 6 years of age. All students entering Kindergarten are required to have two (2) MMR vaccinations.

Less than 1% of students enrolled at Sturgeon R-V Schools have exempted vaccination status. Parents and Guardians of exempt students will receive written notification as a reminder of their exempted status and what will be done to protect them in the event of a measles case in our community.

If you have question or concerns, or would like additional information, please talk with your health care provider, local Health Department staff and/ or school nurse.

