



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Protect Yourself Against the Measles**

**HAYDEN, ID** – With confirmation of measles virus in 14 states, Panhandle Health District (PHD) is advising people to check their vaccination records and [verify](#) that they are current on their Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

The measles, a highly contagious virus, causes rash, a cough, runny nose, eye irritation, and fever. Symptoms appear one to three weeks after exposure. The virus can lead to serious complications including pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death. Measles spreads easily through coughing and sneezing.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 102 measles cases were reported in the month of January. The majority of these cases are linked to an ongoing outbreak in southern California and the most of people who got the measles were not vaccinated.

“It’s the most contagious vaccine-preventable disease,” said Mareva Kammeyer, PHD Immunizations Coordinator. “Measles spreads rapidly because the virus is airborne, but can also live on a surface for two hours. Generally, if one person has it, 90% of the people nearby who aren’t immune will also become infected.”

An increasing number of people are abstaining from recommended vaccinations and providing personal or medical exemptions from vaccinations like MMR. During the 2013-14 school year, Idaho’s MMR exemption rate was 4.8% for Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. In the five northern counties, the rate was significantly higher with 9.2% of students not receiving the MMR vaccine.

“These unvaccinated students could be at risk as this measles outbreak continues to spread across the country,” Kammeyer continues. “The CDC recommends all kids get two doses of MMR vaccine; the first at 12-15 months of age and the second at 4-6 years. The two doses are 99% effective.”

Adults should receive at least one dose of measles vaccine unless they have been previously immunized, were born prior to 1957, have been diagnosed by a doctor with measles, or have other medical contraindications for the vaccine. Adults who are unsure whether they got the vaccine can get one, since there is no harm in getting it a second time. Pregnant women should wait until after giving birth to get the vaccine.

If your vaccination records show a need for updates, call your local provider or make an appointment by calling the PHD clinic in your area.

- Hayden: (208) 415-5270.
- Bonners Ferry: (208) 267-5558
- Kellogg: (208) 786-7474
- Sandpoint: (208) 263-5159
- St. Maries: (208) 245-4556

For more information, including recommended child and adult immunization schedules, visit [www.panhandlehealthdistrict.org](http://www.panhandlehealthdistrict.org).

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