



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



**STATEMENT ON MEASLES
DR. MATT WILLIS
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER
COUNTY OF MARIN
JANUARY 30, 2015**

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On January 28, 2015, two cases of measles were confirmed in Marin County in a pair of unvaccinated siblings. The confirmed cases are Marin's first since in 2001. The children had been exposed outside of Marin as part of the Disneyland outbreak and were not in contact with any children at their school during the period that they could have transmitted the disease.

Marin County Public Health, a division of the County Health and Human Services Department, has been in contact with the family and with the school community to make sure that if there is a school exposure, children who are susceptible to measles will be asked to stay home to protect them and other vulnerable people in our community. As of now, the unimmunized children at their school have not been asked to stay at home because of measles.

Measles is an infectious respiratory disease that can be transmitted through the air. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it spreads through coughing and sneezing and often begins with a fever, runny nose, red eyes and sore throat. Those symptoms are followed by a rash that spreads all over the body.

Public Health Officer Dr. Matt Willis said he could release no more details about the two confirmed cases of measles because of patient privacy laws, but he issued a public health advisory in the wake of heightened local awareness of measles.

"If there were any evidence of a school-based exposures, we immediately would put our exposure plan into place and mandate that unvaccinated students stay home from school for the recommended period," Willis said.

In the event of a measles exposure linked to a school, California law authorizes a local health department to exclude children unvaccinated for measles from that school for the maximum incubation period of 21 days. Willis said Marin is prepared to act in that instance. At this time there is no evidence of a school-based exposure for the two confirmed cases.

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Fortunately, vaccination rates have increased in Marin over the past two years as more parents choose to protect their children and their community from preventable illnesses. Marin's exemption rate is at 6.5 percent, reflecting a drop of 18 percent in the past two years. Marin HHS is actively involved in a public education campaign to get children vaccinated against measles and other illnesses.

"We hope that increasing numbers of parents will choose to protect their children and their community from preventable illnesses," Willis said. "The Department of Health and Human Services is fully engaged in prevention and surveillance efforts that are informed by best practices in public health and by our legal responsibility. However, stopping the spread of measles and other illnesses requires a community-wide effort. We call on all families, individuals, and communities to care for themselves and others by getting immunized."

More information is available on www.marinhhs.org, including about the County's [immunization program](#). Website information will be updated as needed.