

Measles: Current Situation and Community Preparedness

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Objectives

- **Provide an update on the current situation in the United States, regionally, and North Carolina**
- **Share how Wake County is preparing**
- **Share potential community impacts if Measles occurs in Wake County**
- **Highlight prevention measures families can take**
- **Highlight where to get an MMR vaccine in Wake County**

Disclaimer: The information in this presentation is current as of March 13, 2026.

Why Measles Matters

Why Public Health Closely Monitors Measles

- Measles is a highly contagious viral disease
- The virus can remain in the air for **up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves the area**
- The virus can lead to serious complications in high-risk populations including infants, children, pregnant individuals, and immunocompromised persons
- The Good News! **Two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine provide strong protection against the virus.**

What to Look For?–Common Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms usually begin 7 to 14 days after exposure but can take as long as 21 days to appear. Early symptoms include:

- Fever, cough, runny nose, red, watery eyes
- Sometimes small, white bumps or spots appear in the mouth. These are called Koplik spots.

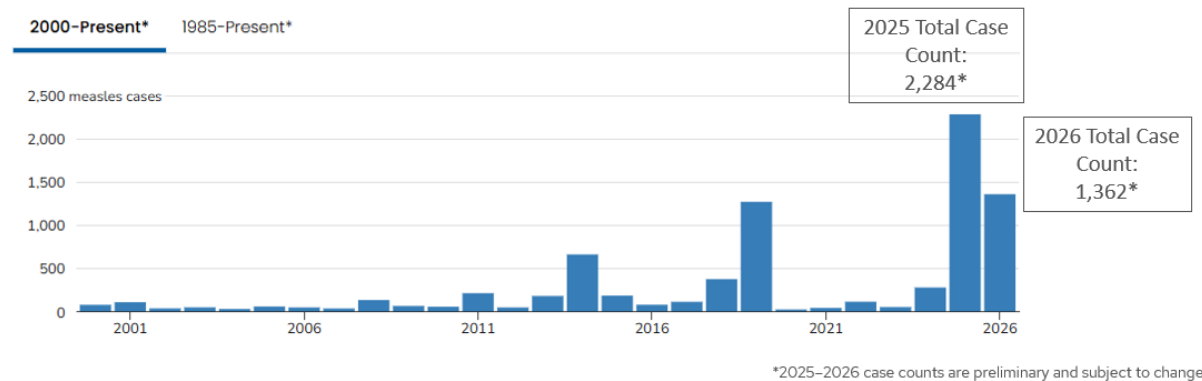
As the disease progresses:

- After a few days, a rash appears, usually on the head or face. As the days pass, the rash spreads to other parts of the body, including the torso, arms and legs.

Current Situation: Measles in the United States

Yearly measles cases

as of March 12, 2026

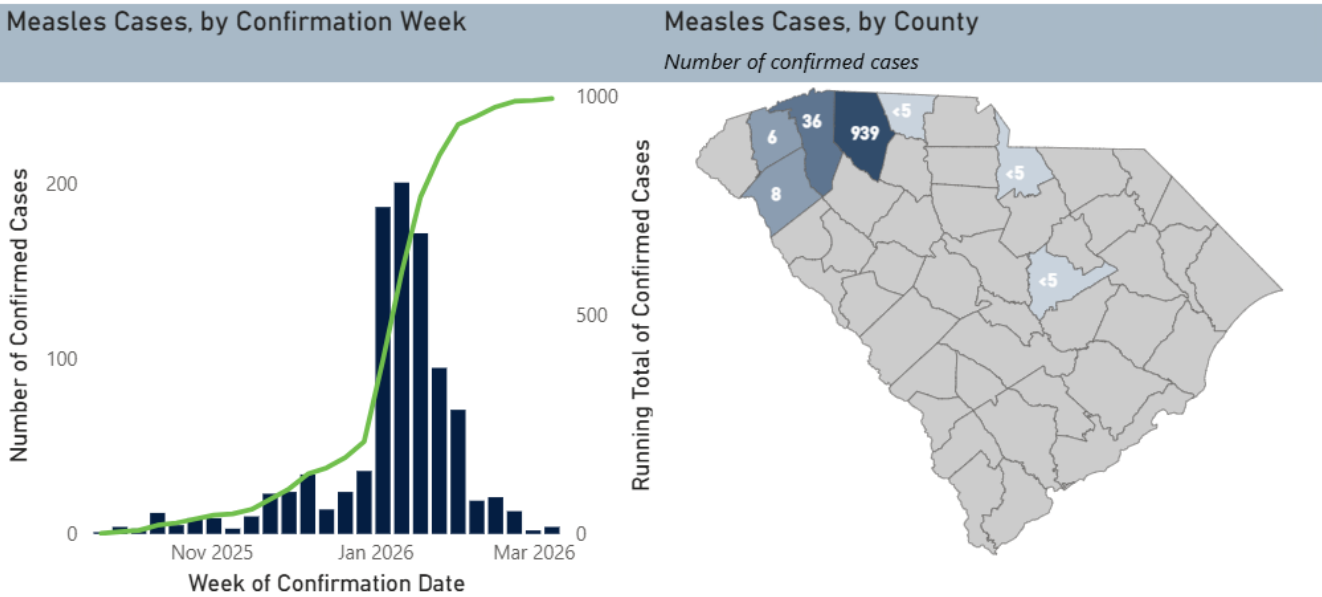


- 1,362 confirmed measles cases reported in the U.S. in 2026 so far
- Cases reported across 31 jurisdictions
- Most cases are linked to outbreaks
- Outbreaks are often associated with:
 - International travel
 - Pockets of lower vaccination coverage

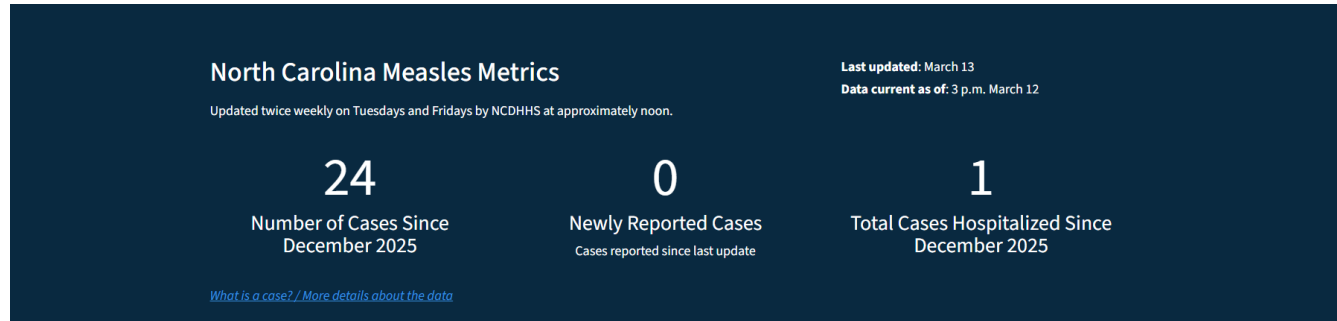
Current Situation: Regionally

Large Measles Outbreak in South Carolina

- Ongoing outbreak centered in the Upstate region
- Nearly 1,000 cases reported since October 2025
- Many cases linked to community transmission
- Regional outbreaks increase risk for neighboring states



Current Situation: Measles in North Carolina



- 24 confirmed cases since December 2025
- Cases reported in several counties including:
 - Buncombe
 - Rutherford
 - Burke
 - Mecklenburg
 - Cabarrus
 - Union
 - Johnston
 - Nash
 - Lincoln
 - Polk
- Several cases linked to travel to South Carolina outbreak areas
- Areas within North Carolina where person-to-person spread of measles in the community is known or suspected to have occurred include Buncombe County and the Charlotte Metropolitan Area

Data as of March 12, 2026, Source: [NCDHHS](#)

Wake County Status

What We Are Seeing in Wake County

- **At this time, no confirmed measles cases among Wake County residents**
- Exposure events have occurred from travelers passing through Wake County
- Ongoing monitoring continues, utilizing multiple surveillance systems
- Wake County Public Health remains on heightened alert

Preparedness Efforts

How is Wake County Public Health Preparing?, we are :

- Monitoring surveillance systems and case reports
- Reviewing laboratory testing protocols
- Conducting case investigation and contact tracing when needed
- Coordinating with hospitals and regional partners
- Conducting preparedness exercises and response planning
- Responding to exposure events that have occurred from travelers passing through the county
- Providing guidance and immunizations, including the MMR vaccination, through Wake County Public Health clinics

Potential Community Impacts if Measles Occurs in Wake County

- Individuals with measles must isolate until 4 days after rash onset to prevent further spread
- Public health conducts case investigation and contact tracing to identify and notify exposed individuals
- **People without evidence of immunity who are exposed may need to stay home from school, childcare, or work for up to 21 days after exposure**
- Schools and community settings may coordinate with public health to notify exposed individuals and implement response measures
- In the event of a measles outbreak, response measures may temporarily affect school attendance, childcare operations, workplace activities, and community events

Prevention for Children and Families

Individuals should check whether they or their children are vaccinated or immune against measles.

- Everyone 12 months and older should receive the MMR vaccine
- Infants 6–11 months who are traveling may need an early dose
- Parents and healthcare providers may consider early vaccination for infants 6–11 months in areas with measles transmission
- Talk with your healthcare provider about vaccination if you live in or plan to visit areas experiencing measles outbreaks
- Early symptoms can resemble other respiratory illnesses. If a child develops fever and rash, keep them home from school and contact a healthcare provider before seeking care
- **Not sure if you are protected? Use the NCDHHS “Check Your Immunity to Measles” tool.**

Where to Get an MMR Vaccine in Wake County

MMR vaccines are in Wake County at:

Wake County Public Health Clinics

- Public Health Center-Swinburne Street

Wake County Regional Public Health Centers

- Northern Regional Center – Wake Forest
- Eastern Regional Center – Zebulon
- Southern Regional Center – Fuquay-Varina

Other Vaccination Options

- Primary care providers and pediatricians
- Local pharmacies and retail clinics
- Urgent care clinics and healthcare systems

Learn more about the MMR vaccine and how to find a vaccination provider:

<https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/immunization/details/mmr-vaccine>

What Communities Should Know

Key Messages

- Measles is highly contagious but **preventable through vaccination**
- **Most cases in North Carolina have occurred in people who are not vaccinated**
- Two doses of the **MMR vaccine provide strong protection**
- Wake County Public Health **is actively monitoring and preparing for potential cases**
- **Residents should check their vaccination records.** If unsure, speak with a healthcare provider or use the NCDHHS "**Check Your Immunity**" tool.

Resources

- To access Wake County Public Health's measles informational page, please visit <https://www.wake.gov/departments-government/public-health/communicable-diseases-and-pests/measles>
- For information on measles cases and outbreaks in North Carolina, please visit <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/communicable-disease/infectious-respiratory-diseases/measles-rubeola/measles-cases-and-outbreaks-north-carolina>
- For information on Measles Guidance for NC Child Care, Schools and Colleges/Universities, please visit [Measles Guidance for NC Child Care, Schools and Colleges/Universities | Division of Public Health](#)
- For information about the MMR vaccine and how to find a vaccination provider, visit: <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/immunization/details/mmr-vaccine>
- To access the "Check Your Immunity" tool informational page, please visit: <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/epidemiology/communicable-disease/infectious-respiratory-diseases/measles-rubeola/check-your-immunity-measles>