

## **News Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **Measles: A Nationwide Issue**

Measles disease has become a nationwide issue over the past few months with more than 626 cases in 22 states as of April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Several of the surrounding states have reported measles cases. These states include Colorado, Missouri and Iowa.

With upcoming graduations, summer travel plans, and kids headed off to camps, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department encourages all residents to check their immunization status.

“Measles is one of the most highly contagious vaccine-preventable diseases. Measles can remain in the air for up to two hours after someone that is contagious has visited. People who are unvaccinated or are not immune and are exposed to measles have a 90% chance of getting this disease,” states Melissa Propp RN, Public Health Nurse and Disease Surveillance Coordinator.

The measles virus is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Persons with measles can spread the disease up to four days before the onset of the rash and up to four days after the rash begins, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CDC recommends that people get MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps, and rubella. Children should get two doses of MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 to 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age.

Teens and adults should also be up to date on their MMR vaccination. According to the CDC adults who were vaccinated prior to 1968 with either inactivated (killed) measles vaccine or measles vaccine of unknown type should be revaccinated with at least one dose of live attenuated measles vaccine. This recommendation is intended to protect those who may have received killed measles vaccine, which was available in 1963-1967 and was not effective.

If you were born before 1957 you may have natural immunity. If you have questions about whether you may need an MMR booster talk with your health care provider.

If you have further questions about measles or the MMR vaccine call Melissa Propp, RN Public Health Nurse at (308) 345-4223.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov). Call (308) 345-4223 or stop by the office at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street in McCook.

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