



## Update on Measles in Pima County – Letter from Schools to Parents

January 26, 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) has confirmed two cases of measles since December 31, 2025. Measles is highly contagious. We need your help to keep our schools and childcare communities safe.

The most effective way to prevent measles is vaccination. Both the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend the MMR vaccine as safe and effective at preventing measles. **PCHD strongly supports immunization as the most effective tool to prevent measles** and other diseases that can cause serious illness and death.

Schools and childcare facilities are being asked to review the immunization status of all staff, students, and children to ensure that everyone is protected. Arizona Administrative Code [R9-6-303](#) allows a parent to exempt their child from a vaccine – but it also defines what would happen in the event of an outbreak. If a measles exposure were to happen in a school or childcare facility, any child determined to be an exposed contact without evidence of immunity **would be excluded from school/childcare** until one of the following:

- Provide written documentation of vaccination against measles:
  - At least one dose of MMR vaccine given after 12 months of age, and
  - Two doses of MMR vaccine for school-aged children and adults
- Provide a laboratory test showing immunity (antibody titers)
- Provide laboratory confirmation of prior measles disease, or
- A full incubation period (21 days) has passed

Symptoms typically start 7-14 days after exposure but may take up to 21 days. Measles is a highly contagious infection that can cause brain damage, vision and hearing loss, lifelong complications, and death – even among healthy persons. The illness often begins with a high fever, red watery eyes, cough, and runny nose. This is followed a few days later by a rash that is red, raised, and blotchy. The rash usually begins on the face, moves down to the body then out to the arms. A person with measles is considered contagious from 4 days before the rash begins until 4 days after.

If you or your child develops symptoms of measles as described above, please contact your healthcare provider **by phone**.

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Everyone. Every where. Every day.



The Pima County Health Department recommends keeping all children up to date on their immunizations as the best way to prevent illness and protect their health.

- **People who have two measles immunizations are considered immune and protected from measles.** If your child's immunization records are not up-to-date or if you are unsure of their immunization status, we strongly encourage you to contact your healthcare provider to discuss their immunization status.
- If your child does not have proof of measles immunity (as defined above) and is determined to be a contact to a confirmed measles case, your child will be kept out of school for 21 days from the last date of contact. We understand that this would be a major inconvenience for working families, but it is a critical public health measure defined in state law that helps keep all of our students/children safe.

For more information about Pima County Health Department's Immunization services, including clinic locations, hours, and insurance information, please visit [Pima County Immunizations](https://pima.gov/2120/Immunizations) (pima.gov/2120/Immunizations) or for more information about measles visit [pima.gov/2381/Measles](https://pima.gov/2381/Measles) or call 520-724-7797.

PCHD also respects the rights of parents to decide whether to vaccinate their child. Under state law ([A.R.S. §15-873](#)), a child must have **EITHER** proof of immunization **OR** a completed exemption form on file with the school and/or childcare facility. Exemption forms are available on the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) website:

- [Medical Exemption Form](#)
- [Personal Beliefs Exemption Form](#)
- [Religious Beliefs Exemption Form](#)

Please note:

- ADHS forms are the only valid and acceptable forms of exemption and cannot be altered.
- Childcare facilities and schools cannot accept any exemption form that is not the ADHS format or letters from parents or other persons.

Please feel free to reach out to your school nurse or primary care provider if you have any questions or need assistance in obtaining your child's immunization records.

Thank you for helping prevent the spread of measles in our community.

**A Healthy Pima County**  
Every one. Every where. Every day.