

Measles in 2026: Additional Webinar Questions

- **Should adults over the age of 65 receive a booster?**
Not routinely. The exception would be that if someone is planning for immunosuppression where their defense against measles might fall - for example, planning for a transplant, or chemotherapy, that person should discuss boosting with their physician.
 - Dr. Cameron Wolfe
- **Is it true that the rash almost always begins on the face? Or are there other common places it begins?**
Traditionally it starts on the head and works its way down. But this is not universal, nor is it always that someone with 'mild' measles gets a rash at all. In darker skin, it can be really hard to see the rash. So the head-to-feet progression of the rash can help diagnose measles, but it's not always seen that way.
 - Dr. Cameron Wolfe
- **I read that people who are severely immunocompromised should not get vaccinated. What counts as severely immunocompromised? Lupus?**
This is a great question - lupus by itself is not immunosuppressive enough to prevent vaccination. In fact, people with lupus should check their vaccine status because there's often a need to add more immunosuppressive medications later that will make vaccination impossible. For people already taking immunosuppressive medicines (eg: steroids, chemotherapy) they should talk to their doctor. It's a very individual decision.
 - Dr. Cameron Wolfe
- **What is vaccine shedding?**
While the MMR vaccine is a live-attenuated vaccine (meaning it contains a weakened form of the measles, mumps, and rubella viruses), it does not cause "shedding" in a way that leads to the spread of measles, mumps, or rubella to other people. While very small amounts of virus may be detectable shortly after receiving the MMR vaccine, this does not cause a risk of infection to others.
 - Dr. Jeffrey Jenks

- **Is NC currently in an outbreak? My 8-month-old's pediatrician won't vaccinate early but I saw you all say infants can be vaccinated at that age in outbreaks.**

An outbreak is defined as more cases of a disease than what is usually expected. Since we don't normally expect to have measles cases in North Carolina and we have 24 measles cases since December of 2025, we are technically experiencing an outbreak in the state as a whole, but not within Durham County. With that said, the risk of measles to the general public is still low. Since we have not had any measles cases in Durham County, there is currently no recommendation to start vaccinating infants younger than 12 months.

- Dr. Jeffrey Jenks

- **How is measles being confirmed? Is there somewhere we can see the data?**

The confirmed cases are ones that have either or both of a molecular test for measles through a state public health or approved lab, or less commonly, a case where we see a specific antibody on blood tests, called an IgM, that only appears in early new infections. So all the cases we have are confirmed cases. The risk is that we've actually significantly UNDER-counted, because if the right tests weren't sent, or those with illness didn't present to the health center who figured out it was measles. In fact, we know we've undercounted because we keep seeing molecular evidence of measles show up in various county and state wastewater assessments, even though we hadn't found cases in that jurisdiction. But all the reported cases have to have laboratory evidence - there's so many challenges that come from the infectivity of even a signal positive case that we have to be strict with the diagnoses of each of these. You can trace local cases [here](#).

- Dr. Cameron Wolfe

- **Will the health department begin screening for measles if an outbreak starts?**

In the event of a measles outbreak, we will work with our team and local leaders to determine if any level of screening for symptoms becomes necessary here at the health department or other county buildings. At this time we are not experiencing an outbreak in Durham, but as always, if you are feeling sick, we ask that you stay home if possible, wear a mask if you

have to go out, and call your doctor about your symptoms if you believe you may have measles.

- Dr. Rod Jenkins