

Health Trends

The Measles (Rubeola)

Over the past few years, the **Measles (Rubeola)** virus has been on the rise in Virginia, across the United States and around the world (3)(4). As of May 15, 2026, [the Johns Hopkins U.S. measles tracker](#) has reported 35 diagnosed cases of measles in the Commonwealth, a 600% increase when compared to the 5 cases reported for the entirety of 2025 (1).

Since the start of 2026, Measles has been reported in 37 states (2). Texas, Utah, Florida and South Carolina have reported the largest measles outbreaks (1). As of May 15, 2026, there are already 2,006 cases of measles in the US (1). If the current trend continues there may be as many as 5,772 cases of measles for the year, far surpassing the 2,214 cases for the entirety of 2025.

Measles is reportedly the single most contagious viral infection throughout human history (2)(3). It is a highly transmissible illness that spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after the infected person leaves the area. Young children are at highest risk for contracting the rubeola virus, although anyone at any age can get the measles especially if they have not been vaccinated.

Measles symptoms appear in two phases. The first stage of symptoms typically begins within 7 to 14 days after exposure. The first stage of symptoms include:

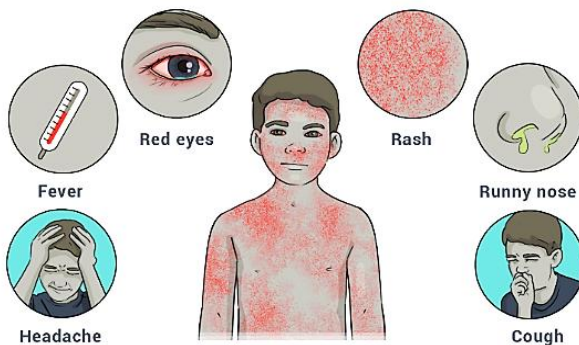
- Fever greater than 101 degrees
- Runny nose
- Itchy watery red eyes
- A cough
- Headache
- Small white spots (Koplik spots) may be seen on the gums and inside of the cheeks

The rash is the second phase of symptoms, usually appearing within 14 days after exposure.

- The rash frequently starts on the face then moves to the rest of

A one dose **Measles** vaccine started being administered in 1963 in the U.S. which proved to be 93% effective against the virus. In 1989 the use of a second dose was introduced which increased effectiveness to 97% (2)(3).

- The Measles virus is preventable through a safe and effective Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine and had been declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000 due to the use of the two-dose vaccination (2).
- Two doses of the vaccine is recommended to be given to children at age 12 to 15 months and a second dose at age 4 to 6 years (5).
- Adolescents who have not been previously vaccinated should get 2 doses (with at least 28 days between doses); those who only received one dose previously should receive a second dose (2).
- It is considered best practice for all adults born in 1957 or later who have not been vaccinated or have not had the measles virus to be vaccinated.
- Those vaccinated between 1963 - 1968 may have received one dose of a measles vaccine which has been found to be less effective (2).
- If you are not sure whether you were vaccinated, it is safe to get another measles vaccine (2).
- The only people who should not get measles vaccine are those who are immunocompromised or pregnant, or those who have had an allergic reaction to previous vaccines (2).
- A person is considered immune to the measles virus if they have received the recommended two-dose vaccination or have a lab test showing the individual has had the measles (3).
- Talk with your primary care provider (PCP) to find out if you should get vaccinated or a booster.
- It is important to note that because measles is so infectious, to protect an entire community, more than 95% of that community needs to be vaccinated.
- One in five individuals who get the measles virus will require hospitalization. Some individuals experience severe complications from the measles virus, such as a lung infection (pneumonia), brain infection (encephalitis), deafness related to ear infection, or other serious infections due to damage to the immune system.



SYMPTOMS OF MEASLES

References

1. [John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. \(2026, May\). Tracking measles cases in the U.S. John Hopkins University. \[Internet\]](#)
2. [National Foundation for Infectious Disease. \(2026, May\). Measles. \[Internet\]](#)
3. [Prober, C. \(2025, March\). Understanding measles, a highly infectious but preventable disease. Stanford University Center for Health Education \[Internet\]](#)
4. [The Virginia Department of Health \(VDH\). \(2026, May\). About measles: The 2026 Virginia measles response. \[Internet\]](#)
5. [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\). \(2025, November\). M-M-R® II \(Measles, Mumps, and Rubella Virus Vaccine Live\) for injectable suspension, for intramuscular or subcutaneous use Initial U.S. Approval: 1978. Merck & Co., Inc. 1-11.](#)

Health Trends



Getting to Know an Office in the Division of Developmental Services

Introducing a new series called “Getting to Know the Division of Developmental Services”. Over the next several months we will be doing a short overview of each of the offices and their teams within Developmental Services (DS) at the Virginia Department of Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).

DBHDS strives to ensure all individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) have access to quality support and services when and where they need them.

The Commonwealth’s system of services and supports for individuals with a developmental disability assists individuals from birth through adulthood. Individuals are supported based upon their specific, individual needs, and age-related developmental concerns. The majority of DD services are accessed at the local level with oversight by DBHDS.

If you haven’t heard the Division of Developmental Services (DS) has a new director. Mr. Eric Williams, who previously directed the Office Provider Network Supports.

The DS division is made up of six offices with a varying number of teams within each office and employs around 135 people.

These include:

- The Office of Behavior Network Supports (BNS)
 - Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Consultants
- The Office of Community Network Supports
 - Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)
 - Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP) Team
 - Supported Decision Making
 - Employment
- The Office of Integrated Health Supports Network (OIHSN)
 - Project Manager
 - Mobile Rehab Engineering (MRE) Team
 - Physical Therapist/Certified Wound Care Specialist/Assistive Technologies Specialist (PT/CWS/ATP) Consultant
 - Dental Mobile Team
 - Registered Nurse Care Consultants (RNCC) Team
- The Office of Provider Network Supports (PNS)
 - Individual Team Community Resource Consultants (CRC)
 - Provider Team Community Resource Consultants (CRC)
 - System (Community Service Boards) Team Community Resource Consultants (CRC)
 - Regional Support Team (RST)
- The Office of Transition Network Supports (TNS)
 - Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASSR) and Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) Team
 - Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/IID) Team
- The Office of Waiver Network Supports (WNS)
 - Customized Rate Team
 - Regional Supports Team
 - Service Authorization Team
 - Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) Team

<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services-for-individuals-and-families/> [Developmental Services for Individuals and Families - Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services \(DBHDS\)](#)

ABA Snippets ...

Environment

Simply put, in behavior science there are two ways to change behavior. You can do something before a behavior, or something afterward (1). Today we are going to focus on something you can do before a behavior.

Look around you. What do you see? Everything and everyone around you make up your environment. If I were to walk in the room right now, I would be in your environment, and you would be in mine. Do not worry, I am not going to walk in the room. You may not think about it a lot, but your behavior is impacted by your environment.

For example, if someone took all the furniture out of your environment, what would you do? You could stand, sit on the floor, yell at them to bring your chair back, or leave to go find an environment with a sofa. What if someone marched in your room playing a loud trombone? How would that impact your behavior?

It is hard to know just how someone’s behavior will be impacted by the environment. Some changes make a difference, and some do not. Some things impact you but not me. Functional behavior assessment, preference assessments, and information garnered from a robust person-centered plan can give clues on what is meaningful for a person.

The environment can be changed by adding or removing things in key places. Alarms and timers can help us know when to start or stop doing something. You can reorganize everything in the room or remove things that are distracting. Or my favorite is called Environmental Enrichment. That is putting preferred or frequently used items nearby, or easy to see and access (2). Life is pretty good when we have access to stuff we need or like.

Just look around and think about what might happen if you change something in your environment. It could change your behavior or help someone else. Environmental changes work well with positive reinforcement. Check out previous issues of this newsletter to learn more about [positive reinforcement](#).

You may contact DBHDS about these efforts via the following: Brian.Phelps@dbhds.virginia.gov

References

1. Daniels, A. C., & Lattal, A. D. (2020). Live a better life: Using the science of behavior to drive personal and Social Change. PMP.
2. Smith, R. G. (2011). Developing Antecedent Interventions for Problem Behavior. In Handbook of Applied Behavior Analysis (pp. 297–316). essay, The Guilford Press.

App of the Month



Action Blocks makes routine actions easier with customizable buttons on your Android home screen. Powered by the Google Assistant, you can easily set up Action Blocks for a loved one. Action Blocks can be configured to do anything the Assistant can do, in just one tap: call a friend, watch your favorite show, control the lights, and more. DIVA was the starting point for Action Blocks, which uses the Google Assistant to make it easier for people who have a cognitive disability to use Android phones and tablets. (App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS Office of Integrated Health. User accepts full responsibility for utilization of app).