**Measles Health Advisory**

For Whitman County Families

April 4, 2025

Dear Families of Whitman County Schools & Childcare Facilities,

In the midst of the current nationwide measles outbreaks, Whitman County Public Health encourages families to stay vigilant against the potential spread of measles in Whitman County.

**Why are we concerned?**

Throughout 2024, 285 measles cases were reported in the United States. So far in 2025, **483 measles cases** have been confirmed. Among them:

**97%** of cases were unvaccinated or had unknown vaccination status.

**2 deaths** occurred in unvaccinated individuals.

**25% of children under 5** required hospitalization.

**What is measles?**

Measles is a virus that infects the lungs and respiratory passages, including the nose, mouth, and throat, before spreading throughout the body.

**How does measles spread?**

Measles is highly contagious. Infected individuals can spread the disease before noticing any symptoms, particularly in the four days before and after a rash develops.  The virus spreads easily by sharing the same air with an infected person, especially if that person coughs or sneezes.

**What are the symptoms of measles?**

Measles usually starts with a high fever, runny nose, and red and irritated eyes. After 3-5 days, a red, bumpy rash appears on the face and spreads downward.

Although rare, measles can cause severe complications, including pneumonia, brain swelling, and even death.

**Is there a treatment for a measles infection?**

There is no treatment for measles, but you can take actions to feel better and prevent complications.

Vitamin A may help severely ill children recover but does not prevent measles.

**Preventing measles in your family**

Getting immunized is the best way to prevent measles.

The first MMR vaccine is recommended between 12-15 months and the second dose before entering school at 4-6 years. The two doses of the MMR Vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles and protection is long-lasting.

**Preventing a measles outbreak in our community**

Herd immunity protects a community from outbreaks by preventing the virus from spreading person to person. For measles a **vaccination coverage** of 95% is required to prevent the virus from spreading. **Whitman County's rate is only 72.2%**, leaving the community vulnerable to outbreaks.

**You can check your child’s MMR immunization status by:**

* Contacting your Healthcare Provider
* Calling WCPH at 509.397.6280 during normal business hours Monday-Friday.
* Visiting myirmobile.com

**Finding the MMR Vaccine**

If you believe your child needs the MMR vaccine, please call your healthcare provider.

If your healthcare provider does not have the MMR vaccine or cannot schedule a timely vaccination, please contact Whitman County Public Health at 509.397.6280. Immunization appointments are available in both our Colfax and Pullman clinic locations.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in keeping Whitman County Schools a safe and healthy place where our children can thrive.

In Health,

Whitman County Public Health

Disease Prevention Program

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