

## Measles and Travel Exposure

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The Safety Committee welcomes you back to the campus! For those of us who traveled recently you might be wondering **“How worried should I be about the current U.S. measles outbreak?”** Even though measles is one of the most contagious airborne viruses, and can linger in the air for 2 hours after the infected person has left the area, the risk of getting sick from measles is low for a U.S. adult. The reason is that most people are vaccinated for measles and their immune systems are trained to fight off the virus. After two measles vaccinations, a person is 97% protected. Still, there remains a 5% breakthrough rate in fully vaccinated people. The recent outbreaks in the U.S. and globally does put travelers at higher risk of exposure. As of this writing, measles has been reported in 18 U.S. states, including California. The U.S. measles outbreak is still considered small compared with [other countries](#) that have much lower vaccination rates in their general population. Texas and New Mexico currently lead the country in the number of measles cases in the 2025 outbreak.

**“How do I know if I am immune to measles?”** There are certain people who may have received only a single dose of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella vaccine) or who did not mount a robust immune response to the vaccine. Requesting a simple blood test called the MMR titer can tell you your immune status. For advice from our on-campus medical clinicians, you may self-schedule an appointment [here](#). The health clinic, offers free phone, video and in-person visits to all CSM students. Our clinicians can order an MMR titer for you at a discounted student rate. The Health Clinic is located in Building 5, Room 302.

**“I may have been exposed to measles, what should I do?”** If you visited or traveled through an area with an ongoing outbreak, watch for fever, cold symptoms and a rash up to 3 weeks after possible exposure. For most people these symptoms usually resolve on their own. We worry about measles infections because a certain percentage of people, especially children who are too young to be fully vaccinated, can develop serious complications like pneumonia and brain swelling which can lead to permanent disability or death. Getting vaccinated can greatly reduce the chances of developing serious complications.

If you have any symptoms, [stay home](#) and call your doctor for advice. The doctor will evaluate your risk level based on your vaccination status and the severity of your symptoms. Guidance may range from supportive care to getting post-exposure prophylaxis. People with measles are considered contagious 4 days before the rash appears, up until 4 days after rash onset. Measles is a vaccine-preventable illness that was declared “eliminated” in the U.S. in 2020. We continue to have measles outbreaks because of imported cases and spread among pockets of unvaccinated groups. Remember to stay home when you are sick to avoid spreading the infection.

Tap [here](#) to learn more about measles in San Mateo County.