



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Oxiris Barbot, MD  
*Commissioner*

## 2019 Health Alert #26: Update on Measles Outbreak in New York City

*Distribute to All Primary Care, Infectious Disease, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, and Infection Control Staff*

- **Community transmission of measles in Brooklyn has ended.**
- **Maintain a high index of suspicion for measles in persons with a compatible fever and rash illness.**
- **Routine recommendations for administration of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine are now in effect.**
- **Vaccinate all children with the first dose of MMR vaccine on time at 12 months of age.**
- **Vaccinate children at 6 to 11 months of age prior to international travel or travel to areas with active measles transmission.**
- **Ensure all older children and adults are up to date with MMR vaccine.**

September 3, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Community transmission of measles in Brooklyn has ended. This is the largest outbreak of measles in the United States since 1992. A total of 654 cases were confirmed, with rash onsets between September 30, 2018 and July 15, 2019. Serious complications included hospitalization (52), intensive unit care (19) and pneumonia (34). Multiple international importations of measles introduced into a community with prevalent delays in vaccination among young children propagated this outbreak.

Although community transmission associated with this measles outbreak has ended, international importations of measles pose a continued risk of outbreaks in New York City. Further, measles cases continue to occur elsewhere in the United States, including in New York State, posing ongoing risk of reintroduction of measles into NYC neighborhoods where there are pockets of unvaccinated individuals, thus re-igniting community transmission of measles. To achieve high population immunity and prevent future outbreaks, providers must ensure that patients receive their first dose of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine at age 12 months and a second dose at age 4 years. Immunizations should be administered on time, with no delay. Providers in previously affected communities no longer need to administer the first dose of MMR vaccine to infants ages 6 to 11 months. However, all children aged 6 to 11 months should receive an early, extra dose of MMR before international travel; this dose does not count towards completion of the routine MMR schedule.

Religious exemptions for all vaccines required to attend school, including MMR vaccine, are no longer valid in New York State. Children should be vaccinated according to state requirements in a timely manner to avoid interruptions in school or day care attendance. Medical exemptions to immunizations are still allowed for children with valid contraindications to immunizations in accordance with the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) and are subject to review. [Visit this page](#) for more information.

Persons suspected to have measles should be reported immediately to the New York City Health Department at (866) 692-3641. Reports should be made at time of initial clinical suspicion. Do not wait for laboratory confirmation to report. If you are considering the diagnosis of measles and are ordering diagnostic testing, then you should report the individual at that time. Visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for “measles and provider” for more guidance. As always, your cooperation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Demetre C. Daskalakis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Demetre C. Daskalakis, MD, MPH  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Disease Control