



Frequently Asked Questions: NYC Measles Vaccine Order for ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249

On April 9, the Health Department declared a public health emergency and issued a measles vaccine order in response to the measles outbreak in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 in Brooklyn. This FAQ provides additional information on this announcement as well as the associated measles vaccine order.

Why did the Health Department declare a public health emergency in response to the measles outbreak in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249?

The Commissioner of Health can declare a public health emergency when there is an urgent threat to the health of New Yorkers.

There is currently an active measles outbreak in the Williamsburg and Borough Park neighborhoods of Brooklyn that qualifies as such a threat. The outbreak began in early October 2018 and has resulted in nearly 300 cases of this vaccine-preventable disease. In the last three months the vast majority of these cases have been in residents of ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249. The Health Department has tried multiple strategies to end this outbreak, including intensive outreach to the affected community and the medical providers who serve them. Additionally, the Health Department required any unvaccinated children to be excluded from yeshivas and child care programs serving this community. However, the outbreak continues due to low vaccination rates in these ZIP codes.

This outbreak is being fueled by the spread of dangerous misinformation on the safety and effectiveness of the MMR vaccine. The Health Department stands with the majority of people in this community who have worked hard to protect their children and others at risk. There is an urgent need to end this outbreak and protect New Yorkers from this potentially fatal infection. This declaration will help improve vaccination rates in the affected communities.

What does the measles vaccine order do?

To stop the spread of measles in New York City, the Health Department requires that adults and children ages 6 months and older who live, work or go to school in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 receive a measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. People who cannot receive the vaccine for valid medical reasons, including pregnant individuals, are exempt from the vaccine order.

The risk of getting the measles is low for vaccinated or immune individuals. For most people in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249, this order should encourage you to check your immunization records or talk to your health care provider to confirm your vaccination history or immunity status.

Are infants 6 through 11 months included in the vaccine order?

Yes, all infants living or attending child care in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 are included in the vaccine order. The early dose of the MMR vaccine will protect them during the current outbreak. Children should then return to the recommended vaccine schedule and the first dose of the MMR vaccine should be repeated at 12 months of age. Children must have two doses of the MMR vaccine to attend school (kindergarten – 12th grade).

Please use the following guidance regarding an early dose of the MMR vaccine for infants 6 through 11 months of age who do not live in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249:

- Recommended for members of communities with a known measles outbreak in Borough Park and Crown Heights.
- Suggested for members of the Orthodox Jewish community in New York City.
- Recommended for all infants traveling internationally or to a community with a known measles outbreak.

What if I work in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249?

If you work for a business located in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 then you are required to have the MMR vaccine to stop the spread of measles. We encourage you to check your immunization records or talk to your health care provider to confirm your vaccination history or immunity status.

How will the Health Department know who isn't vaccinated?

When Health Department staff identify a patient with measles, they also identify anyone that person has had contact with. The Health Department and health care providers connect these contacts with immunization or other preventive measures and work with them to reduce the risk of measles. Health Department staff also use the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) to check the vaccine record of any individual who may have been in contact with a patient with measles. If immunization records are not available, the Health Department may request other evidence of immunity to measles. For example, a blood test, called a measles serology, can prove that someone is immune to measles through prior vaccination or infection with the measles virus. Your health care provider can order this common test and arrange to have your blood drawn. Anyone in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 who cannot prove they are immune to measles by producing immunization records or demonstrate immunity with a positive measles serology blood test will be considered non-immune and unvaccinated by the Health Department and will be in violation of the vaccine order.

What happens if I refuse the vaccine?

The Health Department has ordered everyone in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 to get vaccinated if they have not already done so. The Health Department may issue a civil summons to anyone who lives, works or attends school in the affected ZIP codes and has not been vaccinated as of April 11, 2019, and does not provide proof of immunity or a valid medical exemption to the Health Department. If the unvaccinated person is a child, the summons will be issued to the parent. The person

receiving the summons will be entitled to a hearing at the New York City Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. If the hearing officer upholds the summons, a \$1,000 penalty will be imposed. Failing to appear at the hearing or respond to the summons will result in a \$2,000 fine.

What happens if I cannot take the vaccine because of a medical condition or other medical reason?

There are few medical reasons that would prevent you from receiving the MMR vaccine. If you are a known contact of a measles case and there is a medical reason that would prevent you from receiving the MMR vaccine, including pregnancy, you will be asked to produce specific documentation from a healthcare provider licensed to practice in New York. This medical documentation must explicitly state the condition that makes it impossible for you or your child to be vaccinated. A general provider note without a clear statement of why you cannot receive the vaccine will not be accepted as a valid medical exemption. If your documentation is confirmed, the fine against you will be withdrawn.

Individuals with medical reasons that prevent them from receiving the MMR vaccine after exposure to measles may be able to receive another preventive treatment called immune globulin. The Health Department will provide guidance to eligible individuals who require immune globulin.

What else is the Health Department doing to stop the spread of measles?

The Health Department will continue to require yeshivas and child care programs that serve the affected community and are located in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 to exclude children who do not have the required doses of the MMR vaccine. Children will be allowed to go back to their child care or yeshiva if they prove they are up to date on their MMR vaccines or have laboratory tests (measles serology) that show they are immune to measles. These exclusion requirements are in place until the end of the outbreak or until the Health Department determines it is safe for unvaccinated students to attend these yeshivas or child care facilities. The Health Department is also partnering with community-based medical providers, organizations, religious leaders and other locally trusted voices to share education on vaccinations and engage with concerned families.

Which schools are affected by the exclusion requirements?

Yeshivas and child care programs in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 in Williamsburg have been given a Commissioner's Order to exclude unvaccinated children from attending school during the outbreak. Additional yeshivas and child care programs in ZIP codes 11204, 11218 and 11219 in Borough Park have also been notified and are required to exclude unvaccinated children. These schools are the only schools required to meet the outbreak exclusion requirements at this time. Students who attend child care or yeshivas in these ZIP codes must be excluded from attending school even if they have a religious or medical exemption or a medical note. Child care programs must also exclude staff who are not vaccinated and do not have proof of immunity. All unvaccinated or non-immune students in any child care or school, in any ZIP code, with a known measles case will also be excluded from school as determined by the Health Department.

Outbreak-Related School Attendance Exclusions

Unvaccinated child lives in or attends a child care program or school located in the following ZIP code	Unvaccinated child is in nursery, Head Start or pre-K program	Unvaccinated child is in grade kindergarten through 12	Unvaccinated child is in grade 9-12 and school has grades 9-12 only
11204	Cannot attend	Can attend	Can attend
11205	Cannot attend	Cannot attend	Cannot attend
11206	Cannot attend	Cannot attend	Cannot attend
11211	Cannot attend	Cannot attend	Cannot attend
11218	Cannot attend	Can attend	Can attend
11219	Cannot attend	Cannot attend	Can attend
11249	Cannot attend	Cannot attend	Cannot attend

Do the outbreak-related school exclusion requirements apply to public or private schools that do not serve the Orthodox Jewish community?

No, these exclusion requirements are currently only in effect for yeshivas or child care programs serving the Orthodox Jewish community in ZIP codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249 in Williamsburg, and in ZIP codes 11204, 11218 and 11219 in Borough Park. To date there have been no cases or transmissions associated with children in these other types of programs or schools, so there is no reason to extend outbreak-related exclusions to public or private programs at this time. The Health Department will adjust these outbreak-related exclusions in the future if outbreak patterns change. For now, it is critical that all children in public or private schools follow the standard Department of Education immunization requirements as well as the current MMR vaccine order requirements to prevent additional measles cases. For more information on Department of Education immunization requirements, visit schools.nyc.gov.

What is measles?

Measles is a viral infection that causes fever and a rash. Almost 30% of people with measles will have complications from this infection, including pneumonia, brain swelling, diarrhea, ear infection, hospitalization and potentially death. It is highly contagious and anyone who is not vaccinated against the virus can get it at any age. Measles can be very severe in people with weakened immune systems and pregnant individuals.

How is measles spread?

Measles is spread through the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs, or even when they breathe. A person with measles is contagious four days before the rash appears and continues to be contagious for four days after the rash appears.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that remains active and capable of causing infection in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours.

How can measles be prevented?

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles. Anyone who has received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine or was born before 1957 (likely immune because of natural infection) is considered immune and highly unlikely to get measles.

All children starting at 12 months old enrolled in pre-kindergarten, nursery school, child care programs and Head Start are required to receive one dose of the MMR vaccine.

Children must have two doses of the MMR vaccine to attend school (kindergarten through 12th grade).

Where can I get the MMR vaccine?

To get the MMR vaccine, check with your health care provider. You can also call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health/clinics.

Where can I get more information about measles?

Talk to your health care provider, call 311 or visit these online resources for more information:

- Measles: nyc.gov/health and search for “measles”
- Measles (Immunization Action Coalition): vaccineinformation.org/measles
- Measles Overview (Centers for Disease Control): cdc.gov/measles