Measles Frequently Asked Questions for Colleges and Universities

What are the symptoms of measles?

Initial symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Koplik spots (tiny white spots inside the mouth) may also appear two to three days after symptoms first appear.

Two to four days later, a rash follows and lasts five to six days. Rash appears as a

- flat red rash (sometimes raised bumps on top of flat red lesions), and
- begins on the head and face and spreads downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet.
- Fever may spike to more than 104°F when rash appears.

After a few days, the fever subsides and rash fades.

What are the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccination requirements for Iowa colleges and universities?

Iowa law does not address measles vaccination requirements for Iowa college and university students or staff. However, many colleges and universities have policies requiring vaccinations for entry.

It is recommended that college and university students who do not have evidence of immunity against measles receive two doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days. It is also recommended that adults who do not have evidence of immunity against measles should receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine.

What types of MMR vaccine exemptions are allowed for Iowa colleges and universities?

Since Iowa law does not address measles vaccination requirements for Iowa college and university students or staff, each institution determines which types of exemptions they will allow.

What are the requirements for persons without presumptive evidence of immunity (including college and university students and staff) determined to have been exposed to a person with confirmed measles?

Presumptive evidence of immunity includes the following:

- Written documentation of adequate vaccines for measles, mumps, and rubella
- Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Laboratory confirmation of disease
- Birth before 1957

In most cases, persons without presumptive evidence of immunity exposed to a person with a confirmed case of measles will be required, under a public health order, to stay in their home (or in a facility where they will not expose others, such as a dorm room with a private bathroom with food

delivered to them) from five days after the first possible exposure until 21 days after the last possible exposure to the person with confirmed measles.

Should Iowa colleges and universities maintain records of students' and staff members' MMR vaccination history?

Since Iowa law does not address measles vaccination requirements for Iowa college and university students or staff, each institution determines whether vaccination records will be maintained. Iowa HHS does recommend that Iowa colleges and universities maintain vaccination records for students and staff members.

If a case of measles were identified within an Iowa college or university, public health officials would work with college or university officials to quickly determine which exposed students and staff are non-immune. Having these records readily available would expedite this determination.



If measles is suspected, individuals should promptly seek evaluation from a healthcare provider, call ahead before arriving to prevent further exposure. Ensure any suspected measles cases are reported to the local public health agency.