



Two Positive Measles Cases Identified in Cabarrus County, NC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kannapolis, N.C. – Cabarrus Health Alliance, January 16, 2026 – Cabarrus Health Alliance, in coordination with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), has confirmed two positive cases of measles in school-aged siblings who do not attend school in Cabarrus County. These cases bring the total number of measles cases identified in North Carolina to 9, with 2 in Cabarrus County. To provide the public with updated information, NCDHHS has launched a new [Measles Cases and Outbreaks Dashboard](#) that will be updated twice per week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, with new case and exposure information.

NCDHHS continues to recommend all unvaccinated individuals ages one year and older receive measles vaccination to protect themselves and those around them. Individuals should also talk with their provider about [vaccination before traveling](#) either internationally or to an outbreak area in the United States.

“Cabarrus County continues to maintain strong measles vaccination coverage, which is the most effective way of protecting our community,” shared Dr. Megan Easterday, CHA’s Medical Director. “For individuals who are not vaccinated or unsure of their vaccination status, we encourage them to contact their healthcare provider to discuss available options.”

Exposure Location

Out of an abundance of caution, public health officials are taking proactive steps to identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed to the virus. People who visited the **Atrium Health Harrisburg Emergency Department**, located at 9592 Rocky River Rd., Charlotte, NC, 28215, between 9:20 p.m. and 3:20 a.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, may have been exposed.

Cabarrus Health Alliance is working closely [with NCDHHS](#) and Atrium Health to identify and contact individuals to determine if they have immunity to measles and to discuss action that might be needed to lower the risk of further spread.

Laboratory testing is not recommended for people who were exposed unless they develop symptoms of measles, including high fever and rash. If you think you have been exposed during this period, please call Cabarrus Health Alliance at (704) 920-1399 for guidance.

What Is Measles and Why It Matters

Measles (rubeola) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus that spreads easily through coughing, sneezing, or talking. It can also linger in the air or on surfaces for up to two hours where an infected person was present. The disease often begins with symptoms that resemble a cold. Symptoms typically appear 7 to 14 days after exposure and include:

- High Fever (may spike to more than 104 degrees)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- A rash that is red, raised, blotchy; usually starts on the face, spreads to the trunk, arms and legs 3-5 days after symptoms begin

An individual can spread these infectious particles up to 4 days before they develop a rash or before they even know they are sick. Complications from measles can include pneumonia, brain swelling (encephalitis), permanent hearing loss, and death. Children under 5, pregnant individuals, and those with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable.

Am I Protected?

You are considered protected against measles if you have:

- Documentation of two doses of a measles-containing vaccine (usually the MMR vaccine)
- Laboratory-confirmed immunity or past measles infection
- Were born before 1957 (likely to have natural immunity)

If you're unsure of your vaccination status, now is the time to check. CHA encourages residents to contact their healthcare providers or reach out to CHA directly for assistance in reviewing records or obtaining vaccinations.

Vaccination Guidelines

- **Children:** First MMR dose at 12–15 months; second dose at 4–6 years
- **Adults:**
 - 1 dose if born in 1957 or later and no prior vaccination
 - 2 doses for high-risk adults (e.g., healthcare workers, international travelers, college students)

Vaccines are available through your primary care provider, local pharmacies, and CHA. To schedule an appointment with CHA, please call (704) 920-1399.



If You've Been Exposed

If you believe you have been in contact with someone who has measles:

- **Do not visit a healthcare facility without calling ahead.** This helps avoid spreading the virus to others.
- **Contact your provider or CHA immediately** to assess your immunity and determine next steps.
- **Postexposure prophylaxis (PEP)**—including the MMR vaccine or immunoglobulin—may be recommended within a limited timeframe after exposure.

Individuals without evidence of immunity may be asked to **quarantine for 21 days** after the last known exposure.

When to Seek Help

If symptoms develop, contact your healthcare provider or CHA **before arriving in person**. Testing and isolation protocols are in place to prevent further spread. Confirmed cases require isolation from four days before rash onset through four days after rash onset.

Stay Informed, Stay Protected

Visit the [Cabarrus Health Alliance website](#) for more information about measles.

Visit the [North Carolina DHHS website](#) for more information about measles.

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About Cabarrus Health Alliance: Cabarrus Health Alliance is the public health authority of Cabarrus County. Cabarrus Health Alliance is an autonomous organization providing services and programs to meet public health needs. Cabarrus Health Alliance is a leader in public health and is nationally recognized for its innovation.



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For questions about measles cases in North Carolina, please contact news@dhhs.nc.gov.