



Nov. 19, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has confirmed 11 cases of measles in the past 10 days. That brings the total number of confirmed measles cases in Georgia to 18 so far this year - more than in the previous decade combined.

As physicians and health care providers, we must be ever vigilant for patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible measles symptoms. **If you suspect measles in a patient, notify Public Health immediately at 404-657-2588** (during business hours), or **1-866-PUB-HLTH** after hours or weekends.

Please follow the guidance below in assessing patients for measles.

- Healthcare providers should consider measles in the initial differential diagnosis of patients presenting with the following symptoms, particularly those who have a history of recent international or domestic travel, exposure to international travelers, or exposure to a possible measles case:
  - Fever  $\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $38.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) AND
  - Generalized maculopapular rash lasting > three days AND
  - Cough, runny nose or conjunctivitis
- Isolate persons with suspect measles **immediately** (negative pressure room, if available). Patients should be managed in a manner that prevents disease spread in the healthcare setting <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/isolation-guidelines-H.pdf>.
- Report suspect cases of measles **immediately** by calling either the District Health Office or Georgia DPH at **404-657-2588** (during business hours), or **1-866-PUB-HLTH** after hours or weekends. Do not wait on laboratory results before reporting.
- Obtain appropriate clinical specimens. Laboratory testing for measles is required for confirmation. This includes two throat swabs and urine for measles PCR and culture, and blood for serology testing. Detailed specimen collection and shipping guidelines are available at the DPH [measles](#) website. DPH will assist in coordinating measles testing at the Georgia Public Health Laboratory.
- Ensure patients are up-to-date on their vaccinations according to CDC's recommended schedules for [children](#) and [adults](#).

The number of measles cases in the U.S. continues to increase almost daily. Just a few weeks ago, the country was very close to losing its measles elimination status – a very sobering thought in this day and age.

The current measles outbreak in Georgia is small compared to other outbreaks documented around the country. However, the toll even a single case of measles takes goes well beyond physical illness - impacting economies, work forces, education, health care systems, and creating a public health burden to protect vulnerable populations. As such, our role becomes even more critical in identifying every case of measles and preventing transmission, and strengthening vaccine confidence among parents and patients.

Thank you for all that you do to keep Georgians safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kathleen E. Toomey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner & State Health Officer