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## DOH-PINELLAS REPORTS FOUR MORE MEASLES CASES IN UNVACCINATED CHILDREN



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Through additional investigations, the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has identified four additional cases of measles in unvaccinated people since the first one was announced on Aug. 13. The number of cases in Pinellas now stands at seven. Prior to the recent cases, measles had not been seen in the county since 1998.

Some of the individuals have familial relationships with one reporting international travel. The cases are no longer contagious, but DOH-Pinellas is working with community health-care partners to continue its investigation. It encourages all residents and visitors who have not been immunized to get vaccinated.

Measles is a highly contagious and potentially dangerous disease, especially for young children, pregnant women and persons with compromised immune systems. It is vaccine-preventable and has largely been unseen since the MMR (Measles Mumps Rubella) immunization was routinely provided to babies and children as part of a regular schedule of care.

Measles is a virus spread by air droplets when infected people breathe, cough or sneeze. The first symptoms are a fever that may spike to 105°F, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. The blotchy rash commonly associated with measles appears three to five days later.

“Our message continues to be that immunization is the best protection against diseases such as measles,” said DOH-Pinellas Director Dr. Ulyee Choe, an infectious disease specialist. “Measles is highly contagious and can have potentially serious health effects. We have not seen measles in 20 years in Pinellas because of the success of the safe, effective vaccines that prevents it.”

Unvaccinated individuals who are exposed to measles may be excluded for up to 21 days from public places such as school and work where they could infect others. Those with up-to-date MMR immunizations have immunity that unvaccinated people do not. Individuals who are coughing, have a runny nose and red eyes need to contact their health provider, even before they notice a rash associated with measles.

For more information about measles, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/measles/index.html>.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to [www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com) or follow us on Twitter [@HealthyPinellas](https://twitter.com/HealthyPinellas).

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