Monroe County Health Department

Serving the Community since 1921

315 West Oak Street, Sparta, WI 54656 - (608) 269-8666 - Fax (608) 269-8872

9/10/2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

There is currently a measles outbreak in Wisconsin, with more than 150 confirmed cases in the southwest part of the state. The Tomah Area School District, in partnership with the Monroe County Health Department, would like to share important information about measles and how you can help protect your child.

Measles is a viral infection that can cause a high fever, cough, rash, and red, watery eyes. It can lead to serious complications, and because it spreads very easily, vaccination is the best protection. Children need two doses of the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine for the best protection. Protection starts to develop quickly, within only a few days of receiving vaccination.

Measles can have serious long-term consequences, lasting long beyond the initial illness. One example of this is immune amnesia, where the virus erases the immune system's memory of previous infections, leaving an individual more vulnerable to other diseases for years after.

Waivers to school immunization requirements are available for religious, health, and personal conviction reasons. **However, if there is a measles exposure or an outbreak, students who have waivers may be excluded from school until the outbreak is over.** The timeframe for quarantine would be 21 days from the date of last exposure. Students who are fully vaccinated would not need to be excluded.

We encourage you to check your child's immunization record to make sure they have received both doses of the MMR vaccine. You can review their record using the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) at https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/wir.htm. The Monroe County Health Department or your family health care provider may also have your child's immunization record.

If your child needs the MMR vaccine, please call your health care provider. If you have BadgerCare Plus or you do not have insurance, contact the Monroe County Health Department at 608-269-8666 to schedule an appointment. Free MMR vaccine is available for eligible children and adults.

If your child develops a fever and rash, especially one that starts at the hairline and spreads to the arms and legs, please contact your health care provider right away. Keep your child at home and avoid exposing others. **Be sure to call the clinic or hospital before arriving so they can take steps to prevent exposing additional individuals to this highly contagious virus.**

The best way to protect your child is to ensure they have received both doses of the MMR vaccine. For more information, please visit https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/measles.htm

Sincerely,

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Tomah Area School District