



Measles talking points for Community-Based Organizations

Use these talking points to help communicate with your community about measles, vaccination and keeping one another safe and healthy. They are designed to be flexible. Pick the points that are relevant to your audience and use them in your own words whenever possible.

You can share these messages on social media, in newsletters, at community events, in conversations or through other channels. You do not need to use every point. Instead, choose the information that best fits the situation, your audience and the message you want to share.

When possible, keep messages short, clear and focused on the information your audience needs or will find useful.

Measles is a serious illness.

- People with measles are sick for a week or longer. They should stay home and separate from other people.
- Most people who get measles recover. But some people get ear infections, pneumonia or brain swelling. Sometimes people with measles must be hospitalized.
- Measles is usually most dangerous for babies, young children, pregnant people and anyone with a weaker immune system.

Measles spreads very easily.

- Measles has spread in Washington. It is highly contagious.
- Measles spreads when a person with the virus talks, coughs or sneezes. The virus can stay in a room for two hours after the person leaves.
- Most unvaccinated people who are exposed to measles get sick. They can spread the virus before they notice symptoms. That is why unvaccinated people should stay home for 21 days (three weeks) if they are exposed.

- If you have measles symptoms, stay home and apart from other people so the virus does not spread. Measles symptoms include high fever, cough and red eyes.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles.

- The measles vaccine prevents children and adults from getting this illness. Most people who get vaccinated will be protected for life.
- One dose prevents 93% of people from getting measles, and two doses protect 97% of people.
- The vaccine contains a weakened form of the virus that teaches your body to fight off the illness.
- The measles vaccine is also called the MMR vaccine. It protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

If you don't know whether you or your family is vaccinated, you can find out.

- You can contact your clinic, doctor's office or pharmacy and ask them to share your records.
- You can register online to see your records at myirmobile.com. MyIR Mobile works with the Washington State Department of Health to help people access their records. There is no charge to use it.
- The measles vaccine might be listed on records as MMR or MMRV.





The measles vaccine is safe.

- It is understandable that people might have safety concerns or questions about measles. There is a lot of false information about vaccines.
- We know the measles vaccine is safe because scientists in our own communities and around the world have studied it for many years.
- Doctors in our own communities trust the measles vaccine. Your doctor or pharmacist should be able to answer your questions or address your concerns.
- There is no connection between the MMR vaccine and autism. The vaccine does not cause autism.

Everyone can help prevent measles.

- The best way to protect ourselves, our families and our community is to get vaccinated.
- If you are unvaccinated, stay home and apart from others when you have been exposed to measles or you have symptoms. This also helps prevent the spread of the measles virus.

It's important to know the symptoms of measles and what to do if you see them.

- Measles symptoms do not show up all at once. If you have a high fever, cough and red eyes, it might be measles. Stay home and watch for a rash to appear within a few days.
- If you see a rash, call a clinic or doctor. They will help you plan to visit without exposing other people to the virus.
- If you have measles, stay home and apart from other family members or other people you live with. This helps protect them from the virus.

Measles vaccination is available for free or at low-cost.

- Call your clinic, pharmacist, doctor's office or health care provider.
- Vaccines are available for free for kids younger than 19 in Washington, regardless of whether they have health insurance.
- Vaccines are available free for adults 19 and older without insurance. Sometimes providers charge a small fee to give you the shots.
- The Washington State Department of Health vaccine finder shows you where to find free vaccines (here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d9883df272e44f20ae6a76279f5d6a0b>).

