

Detection of Measles in Routine Wastewater Sample Collection

Routt County, CO, October 17, 2025 – Routt County has been participating in the [CDPHE pilot program regarding public wastewater surveillance since May](#). This surveillance program collaborates with wastewater utilities to test for infectious pathogens, including the three viruses that cause most respiratory illnesses we see in the fall and winter seasons:

- Influenza (flu)
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- COVID-19

Earlier this week, CDPHE announced that Measles waste water surveillance data has been added to the [publicly available Data Dashboard](#). The first Measles detections on the dashboard, which will be posted later this week, include Steamboat Springs.

Detection in wastewater does not necessarily indicate an active case or current exposure risks in the community, but it can suggest viral shedding from one or multiple people with a recent measles infection who live, visited, or traveled through Routt County. Measles can be detected in urine up to 14 days after a rash onset in someone with measles. However, a person is only infectious for four days before and after the rash onset.

Wastewater data acts as an additional tool for public health officials, offering a way to track the virus's spread, potentially before clinical cases are reported. This allows for a more timely public health response. When combined with clinical data, wastewater trends can help validate and provide context for what health authorities are observing on the ground. **At this time, public health has not confirmed any cases of measles in residents of Routt County or surrounding areas.**

What this means for our community:

Routt County Public Health strongly recommends that all community members and their children are up to date on their MMR vaccinations. Coloradans can check their or their child's immunization records through the [Colorado Immunization Information System \(CIIS\) Public Portal](#). Please note that records may be incomplete if all vaccines have not been reported by providers. Local vaccine providers:

- Your health care provider
- [Safeway](#)
- [City Market](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Routt County Public Health](#): Routt County Public Health is a Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provider. The VFC program offers vaccines at no cost to children 18 years old or younger who might not otherwise be vaccinated because

of inability to pay, and who meet one of the following eligibility requirements: are Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, underinsured or American Indian or Alaska Native.

About Measles and Vaccinations:

Measles is more than a rash. It is a serious respiratory illness that can lead to severe complications, including hearing loss, brain damage, and in serious cases, death. Measles spreads easily. It can remain in the air for up to two hours and stays on surfaces, too. If one person has it, nine out of 10 people who are unprotected around them will get measles. A person can spread measles to others even before they show symptoms.

Measles is a preventable disease. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and highly effective, providing long-lasting protection. Two doses of MMR vaccine are about 97% effective in preventing measles. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and your community.

“Measles is one of the most contagious diseases, but it’s also one of the easiest to prevent. A simple, safe vaccine protects not just individuals, but entire communities. Getting vaccinated is quick, effective, and a critical step in keeping everyone healthy,” stated Roberta Smith, Director of Routt County Public Health.

People who have received MMR vaccine or were born before 1957 are generally considered immune. If you are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, it is especially important to closely monitor for symptoms during the 21 days after a possible exposure. If additional cases occur, MMR vaccine, given within 72 hours after exposure, can prevent infection. Unvaccinated individuals or those unsure of their immunity should talk to their health care provider about receiving the MMR vaccine. [More information can be found on the CDC’s website.](#)

What to do if you may have been exposed and aren’t feeling well:

People exposed to measles typically develop symptoms 7 to 21 days after exposure. Symptoms include:

- High fever (may spike above 104°F)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Rash (3-5 days after other symptoms begin)

If you develop these symptoms, stay away from others and contact your health care provider immediately. If you do not have a provider, call an urgent care center or emergency department and explain that you may have been exposed to measles. Calling ahead helps prevent additional exposures.

Additional Measles Information from CDC:

According to CDPHE, Colorado now has 31 confirmed measles cases in 2025. CDPHE has basic descriptive information about 2025 cases on their [website](#) that is updated as new cases are reported.

- [Frequently asked questions.](#)
- [Learn about measles.](#)
- [Measles vaccination recommendations.](#)
- [2025 Colorado measles case information](#)
- [Find your vaccine record.](#)

Contact:[Routt County Public Health](#)

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