



Public Health
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Henderson County Department of Public Health

Steven E. Smith, MPA, Health Director | Diana Curran, MD, Medical Director

1200 Spartanburg Highway, Suite 100, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Main Phone: (828) 692-4223 | Administration FAX: (828) 697-4709

Clinic FAX: (828) 697-4691 | Communicable Disease FAX: (828) 697-4504

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Media Inquiries Please Contact:

Kimberly Horton

Office: 828-694-6064

khorton@hendersoncountync.org

County Health Director Encourages Residents to be Up-to Date on MMR Vaccination for Measles

Hendersonville, NC—Although there are no confirmed cases of measles in Henderson County or North Carolina, Health Director Steve Smith is reminding everyone that vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and loved ones from the measles.

“The MMR vaccine is highly effective, safe and readily available,” said Smith. “This multi-state outbreak has increased people’s concern, and as a result, we have received many questions about the vaccine and measles.”

Smith emphasized that measles is one of the most highly contagious diseases there is and spreads quickly in children and adults who are not vaccinated. “For every person sick with measles, on average they will infect 18 others,” he said. “The risk for us now would be from foreign travelers and travelers from states with outbreaks. If you are not sure if you’re current on your vaccinations, we’re always glad to review your immunization history.

“Remember that if most of our population is immunized against measles, it reduces the risk of exposure for everyone. This is called herd immunity, and it means that the risk to families who refuse vaccines, those too young to receive the vaccine and those who are too sick to be immunized is reduced,” he said.

Immunization rates in 2014 for two-year-olds who were current by 24 months of age are 69 percent statewide and 71 percent for Henderson County. For local health departments statewide, the number is 86 percent; for the children served by the Henderson County Department of Health, the number is 90 percent.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends all children get two doses of the measles vaccine, one at 12 to 15 months of age and another at 4 to 6 years of age. A single dose is about 93 percent effective; two doses are about 97 percent effective.

People who received two doses of measles vaccine as children according to the U.S. vaccination schedule are considered protected for life and do not ever need a booster dose. However, there is no harm from receiving an additional dose. Someone born before 1957 is also considered immune from measles.

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Adults need at least one dose of measles vaccine, unless they have evidence of immunity. Adults, who are going to be in a setting that poses a high risk for measles transmission, including students at post-high school education institutions, healthcare personnel, and international travelers, should make sure they have had two doses separated by at least 28 days.

For questions or additional information, contact your health care provider or the health department's Immunization Clinic at 828-694-6015 or visit www.hendersoncountync.org/health.

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