



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 28, 2015
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The Time is Now: Get fully vaccinated

This is a call to action to all Arizonans to protect their community, their family and themselves from measles and many other diseases by being up to date on vaccinations. The measles outbreak that started in Disneyland is here in our state and many people are at risk for the disease which can cause blindness, deafness and even death – especially young children.

“The only way we can protect babies under one year old is to make sure the rest of the community is vaccinated,” said Will Humble, director of the Arizona Department of Health Services. “I’m appealing to everyone whose kids are behind in their vaccinations to get it done now. Vaccinations are the number one way for us to stop this disease and save lives.”

Diseases like measles, mumps and pertussis were almost wiped out in the United States after the development of vaccines. Since 2000, there has been more than a 100 percent increase in the number of unvaccinated children in Arizona.

“This is an excellent time to check your children’s immunizations records and make sure they are fully protected,” said Dr. Cara Christ, Chief Medical Officer for the Department. “It’s a good idea for people who work in healthcare, child care or schools to check their immunization history as well.”

Studies done in Arizona and other places found many of the families that choose not to vaccinate their children tend to live in clusters. The unvaccinated cluster effect is extremely dangerous for a disease as contagious as measles. The virus is able to rapidly spread in these areas, putting surrounding communities at risk. People with measles are contagious before they show the rash and can easily spread the disease in public places without knowing it.

You should be protected from measles if you were immunized by getting two doses of MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine, or if you have previously had the disease.

Symptoms: Typically appear 7 to 12 days after exposure to measles but may take up to 21 days. It begins with fever (101 F or higher), red, watery eyes, cough and runny nose and is followed by a rash that is red, raised, and blotchy. The rash begins on the face at the hairline and moves down the body. The rash may last for 5 to 6 days and may turn brownish.

What to do if you think you have measles: If you have a healthcare provider, contact him/her by phone and let them know that you may have been exposed to measles. They will let you know when to visit their office so as not to expose others in the waiting area. If you do not have a health care provider, you may need to be seen at your local hospital emergency room/urgent care center. Please call before going to let them know you may have measles. For more information on measles’ signs and symptoms or where you may find vaccine, please check with your healthcare provider or your

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