

From: Danielle De Souza [<mailto:ddesouza@health.nyc.gov>]

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To: NYC Health Department Press Office <pressoffice@health.nyc.gov>

Subject: HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORTS ELEVEN NEW CASES OF MEASLES IN BROOKLYN'S ORTHODOX JEWISH COMMUNITY, URGES ON TIME VACCINATION FOR ALL CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY BEFORE TRAVELING TO ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING MEASLES OUTBREAKS



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Acting Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Friday, November 2, 2018
(347) 396-4177**

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORTS ELEVEN NEW CASES OF MEASLES IN
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OUTBREAKS**

There are now seventeen children who have been diagnosed with measles in Williamsburg and Borough Park

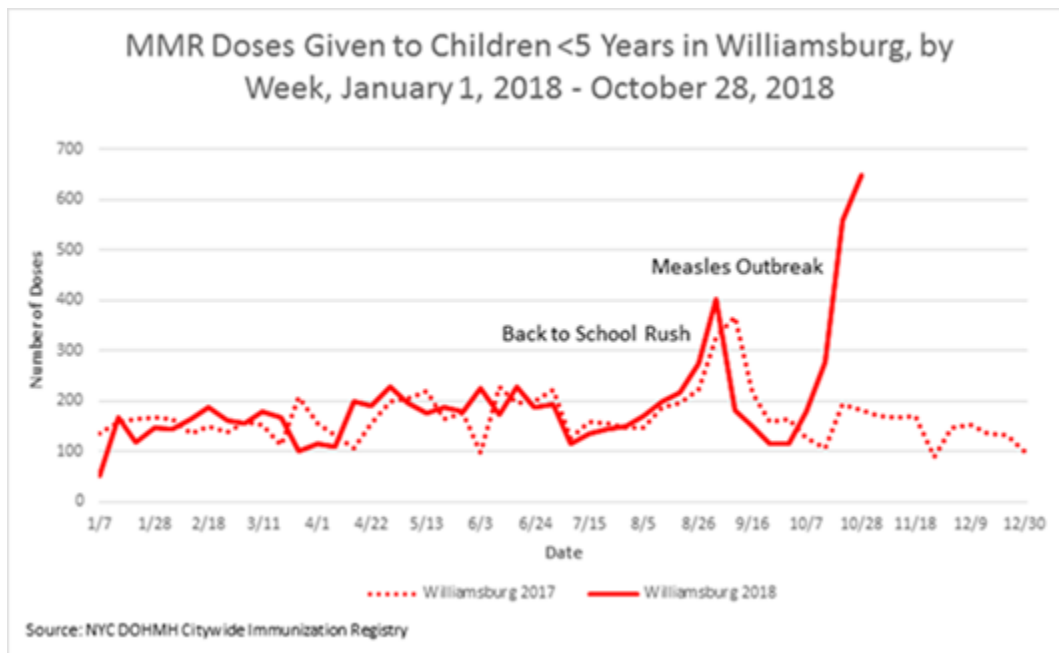
Health Department recommends the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine for all children at age 12 months, with a second dose at 4 to 6 years old; two doses of MMR vaccine are required to attend kindergarten through grade 12; all persons, including infants aged 6 to 11 months, should be vaccinated prior to international travel

Health Department is raising awareness in the Orthodox Jewish communities of Brooklyn by contacting local health care providers and hospitals, providing vaccine to doctors and clinics, sending notifications to religious schools, placing ads in newspapers, and distributing health care posters and literature

November 2, 2018 – The Health Department today is reporting 11 new cases of children with confirmed measles, bringing the total to 17. Communities in Williamsburg and Borough Park are affected. The children with measles range in age from 7 months to 4 years. Three infections, including the initial case of measles, were acquired by children on a visit to Israel, where a large outbreak of the disease is occurring. There has also been transmission in schools with children who are unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated. There are no deaths associated with this cluster, although there have been complications including hospitalization. To increase awareness about measles, the Health Department is sending notifications to schools, providers and hospitals with large Orthodox Jewish populations. The Department is also conducting community outreach in the affected communities, placing ads in local newspapers and distributing posters to health care providers. There has been an increase in vaccination rates in these communities since the

Health Department announced the outbreak, but many more children should receive the MMR vaccine to stop measles transmission.

“The increase in measles cases in Orthodox Jewish communities of Brooklyn demonstrates the importance of getting children vaccinated on time to prevent measles and not put other children at risk,” said **Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “The Health Department continues to strongly recommend unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated now, especially before traveling internationally. If your child develops a rash or fever, contact your physician immediately and keep them home from school or child care.”



“Vaccines prevent infectious diseases, including easily preventable ones like measles, and are widely available to New Yorkers at low or no cost,” said **Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried of Manhattan, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Health**. “Vaccination not only protects the person being vaccinated, but helps prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases - protecting babies, seniors, and those with weakened immune systems or chronic conditions.”

“Vaccinating children is one of the most basic ways a parent can protect their child’s health,” said **Councilman Chaim Deutsch**. “These new cases of measles out breaking within the Orthodox community are worrisome, particularly for parents of children too young to be fully vaccinated against the measles. I urge parents who are traveling with young children to follow Health Department recommendations and vaccinate their kids. I thank the Health Department for their efforts to do outreach and spread the word to ensure New York families are protected.”

“It says in the Torah "V'nishmartem Meod L'nafshoseichem", that a person must guard their health,” said **Rabbi David Niederman, President of the UJO of Williamsburg and North Brooklyn**. “It is abundantly clear on the necessity for parents to ensure that their children are vaccinated, especially from Measles. Thankfully close to everyone in the community

understands and takes very seriously their vaccination obligations. The current outbreak is a risk to the health of the children in our community and it is incumbent for everyone to have their children vaccinated. We are grateful to the Department of Health for their tireless work to end this outbreak, and we will continue to work with the City and community schools to end this serious outbreak."

"As the measles outbreak continues to spread relentlessly," said **Rabbi Avi Greenstein, Executive Director of the Boro Park Jewish Community Council**. "It is imperative that every member of our community protect themselves and their families by getting vaccinated. It is equally imperative to understand that prevention is key. As such, we need to take away the lesson of how important it is for every one of us to avail ourselves of modern medicine and not to trust in herd immunity, but rather to follow the vaccination schedule recommended by medical professionals to protect our families and our entire community."

Per recognized national guidelines, the Health Department recommends the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine for children at age 12 months, with a second dose at 4 to 6 years old. Two doses of MMR are required to attend kindergarten through grade 12. Children attending daycare, nursery school, Head Start and pre-K are required to have one dose of MMR vaccine. All persons, including infants ages 6 to 11 months should be vaccinated prior to international travel. Parents should keep ill children at home and not send them to daycare or school. If there is measles in a student, all unvaccinated children – including those with a medical or religious exemption – will be excluded and unable to attend the daycare or school for 21 days after their last exposure.

Measles is a highly contagious disease. Young children, the immunocompromised, and non-immune pregnant women are at highest risk for severe complications. Measles is transmitted by airborne particles, droplets, and direct contact with the respiratory secretions of an infected person.

Measles typically presents in adults and children as an acute viral illness characterized by fever and generalized rash. The rash usually starts on the face, proceeds down the body, and may include the palms and soles. The rash lasts several days. Infected individuals are contagious from four days before rash onset through the fourth day after rash appearance.

If you think you were exposed to measles, contact your health care provider before seeking care to prevent exposure to other patients. Tell the medical staff if you have fever and a rash and about any known exposures or international travel. You can prevent measles by making sure you and your family have received two doses of MMR vaccine.

Health care providers should ensure that adults and children over the age of 6 months who are traveling outside the U.S. have documented immunity to measles. In addition to the large outbreak currently going on in ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities in Israel, there are large outbreaks in Europe, with over 41,000 cases of measles and 40 deaths reported in 2018. Countries most affected include Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, Greece, Romania, Italy, France, Slovakia, Russia and the United Kingdom, although all countries in Europe have reported cases. There are also outbreaks in many other parts of the world, including countries in Asia, South America and Africa.

Suspected persons with measles should be reported immediately to the Health Department. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/health and search for “measles.”

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MEDIA CONTACT: Christopher Miller/Michael Lanza, (347) 396-4177