



# LA CROSSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Health Alert: Potential Measles Exposure at Several La Crosse and Trempealeau County Establishments**

The La Crosse and Trempealeau County Health Departments were recently notified that a person visiting from another state was confirmed to have measles disease while visiting several La Crosse and Trempealeau County establishments.

La Crosse and Trempealeau County Health Departments are contacting identified establishments to provide recommendations to their employees, and to obtain contacts lists of patrons who visited the establishments during indicated dates and times. Wherever possible, patrons will be contacted to inform them of the potential exposure, and to provide education related to signs or symptoms of measles, identifying if they are at risk for disease and recommending they contact their healthcare provider if they have risk factors, signs or symptoms, additional questions or concerns.

Measles is a serious respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) that causes a high fever, cough, runny nose, red-watery eyes and a rash. It is very contagious, and is spread by an infected person through coughing and sneezing. The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. For more information on measles: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

**Persons most at risk:** Measles can be serious in all age groups, but persons most at risk for measles disease and possible complications include pregnant women, babies, young children, older adults, immune-compromised persons, and unvaccinated persons born after 1957.

**Complications** can include:

- 1 out of 10 children develop an ear infection which can result in permanent hearing loss;
- 1 out of 20 children develop pneumonia, the most common cause of death from measles in young children;
- 1 out of 1,000 children will develop encephalitis (swelling of the brain) that can lead to convulsions and can leave a child deaf or with brain damage;
- 1 or 2 out of 1,000 children will die;
- Pregnant women exposed to measles may give birth prematurely, or have a low-birth-weight baby.
- Immune-compromised persons and older adults are at greater risk of death related to pneumonia and encephalitis.

**Protection/Vaccination:** Measles is a vaccine-preventable disease. Doctors recommend that children receive their first dose of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months of age, and a second dose at 4-6 years of age. The measles vaccine is one of our most effective vaccines, with one dose being 93% effective in preventing measles if exposed to the virus, and 2 doses 97% effective.

**Immunity:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers you protected from measles if you have received 2 doses of MMR vaccine for school-aged children and adults; and 1 dose of MMR vaccine for preschool-aged children. Persons born before 1957 are considered protected from measles due to natural immunity.

**Recommendations:** If you visited any of these establishments on the dates and times listed below, **AND** are unsure if you are protected from measles disease through vaccination or natural immunity, please check your immunization record or consult your healthcare provider. Wisconsin residents can check their immunization records here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/wir.htm>.

- Comfort Inn: 1223 Crossing Meadows Dr, Onalaska 4/13/18 - 4/16/18
- Dollar Tree: 2910 Market Place, Onalaska 4/14/18
- St. Mary's Catholic Church: 20344 W Ridge Ave, Galesville 4/15/18 10:00am - 1:30 pm
- Champions Riverside Resort: W16751 Pow Wow Ln, Galesville 4/15/18 12:30pm - 5:00pm
- Fairfield Inn: 434 3rd St S, La Crosse 4/15/18 6:30pm - 12:00 midnight
- Texas Roadhouse: 4310 WI-16, La Crosse 4/15/18 9:00pm - 11:15pm

If you develop cold-like symptoms with a high fever and/or rash, you should NOT go to any health care facility without calling first. This will help the health care facility prepare for your arrival and allow the facility to provide instructions to you to reduce possible exposures to others at the facility.

La Crosse County Health Department Director, Jen Rombalski, says, "If someone has been potentially exposed and has signs consistent with measles, it is important they stay isolated from others to keep from spreading it. Measles is extremely contagious, and you can have very severe outcomes. For every 1,000 children who get measles, one or two will die from it. If you are diagnosed with measles, it is important to follow the instructions of your health care provider and public health officials to protect your family and community."

Health care providers should isolate suspected measles case-patients and immediately report suspected cases to the local public health agency.