

Health officials combating measles vaccine misinformation as cases reach 1,001

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Editor's note: *On June 10, the number of measles cases rose to 1,022.*

Federal health officials are working to combat misinformation about measles vaccines as the case count reached 1,001 on Wednesday.

Cases haven't been this high since 1992 and threaten the status of measles as a disease that has been eliminated.

"The Department of Health and Human Services has been deeply engaged in promoting the safety and effectiveness of vaccines, amid concerning signs that there are pockets of undervaccination around the country," department Secretary Alex M. Azar II, J.D., said in a [statement](#). "The 1,000th case of a preventable disease like measles is a troubling reminder of how important that work is to the public health of the nation."

About 90% of this year's cases were unvaccinated. Misinformation about the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine continues to spread online despite numerous studies showing the vaccine is safe.

"We cannot say this enough: Vaccines are a safe and highly effective public health tool that can prevent this disease and end the current outbreak," Azar said. "The measles vaccine is among the most-studied medical products we have and is given safely to millions of children and adults each year."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Academy recommend children receive the first routine dose of MMR vaccine at 12-15 months and the second dose at 4-6 years.

The CDC has developed a toolkit at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/toolkit/healthcare-providers.html> that includes resources to help pediatricians talk to families about MMR vaccines as well as fact sheets they can share with parents about immunization schedules, potential complications of measles and the risks of not vaccinating.

Measles can result in complications like pneumonia, brain damage and deafness and can be fatal. This year, about 9% of people with measles have been hospitalized.

The AAP also has been working to decrease vaccine hesitancy. In March, AAP President Kyle E. Yasuda, M.D., FAAP, [sent letters](#) to the CEOs of Google (which owns YouTube), Facebook (which owns WhatsApp and Instagram) and Pinterest requesting that they partner with the Academy to make sure parents using their platforms are seeing credible, science-based information.

AAP leaders also are advocating for the elimination of nonmedical exemptions to school vaccination requirements, which they voted the top [priority at the Annual Leadership Forum](#).

Resources

- [CDC's measles web page for health care providers](#)
- [Information from the AAP Red Book on measles outbreaks](#)
- [AAP clinical report "Countering Vaccine Hesitancy"](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on measles outbreaks](#)
- [AAP News coverage of the 2019 measles outbreaks](#)

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