**MEASLES**

Measles is a disease caused by a virus that spreads very easily from person to person. It usually lasts a week or two. Measles looks and feels like a cold or the flu at first. A cough, high fever, runny nose and red, watery eyes are common. A few days later, a red, blotchy rash starts on the face, then spreads to the rest of the body.

Measles is more easily spread than almost any other disease. The virus that causes measles lives in the nose and throat and is sprayed into the air when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks. It can stay in the air for up to 2 hours. Other people nearby can then inhale the virus. Touching tissues or sharing a cup used by someone who has measles can also spread the virus. People with measles can spread the disease 4 days before the rash begins until 4 days after rash onset. The first symptoms appear 10 - 14 days after a person is exposed.

**There are currently several outbreaks of measles in the United States: New York City, New York State, Washington State, California, New Jersey and Michigan. There has been one case of measles in Massachusetts in 2019 which occurred in greater Boston on Sunday, March 31.**

The best way to protect yourself and your family against measles and other vaccine preventable diseases to ensure that you and your family are vaccinated as recommended. By ensuring that you get your vaccinations, you create **HERD IMMUNITY**.

**Herd immunity** (also called herd effect, community immunity, population immunity, or social immunity) is a form of indirect protection from infectious disease that occurs when a large percentage of a population has become immune to an infection, thereby providing a measure of protection for individuals who are not immune.

Please see the attached fact sheets for more information or consult the CDC website for frequently asked questions concerning measles at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/faqs.html> .

For more information, please consult the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health> or the Centers for Disease Control at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>