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PRESS RELEASE

MoHW Advises Public of Measles Outbreak in the Americas

Belmopan, April 8, 2026.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness informs the public of a rapidly growing measles outbreak in the region of the Americas. Three months into 2026, the region has already recorded 75% of the total cases reported in 2025.

Since the start of the year, the majority of the cases, along with 11 deaths, have occurred in neighbouring countries Guatemala and Mexico. This outbreak in the Americas is expected to continue growing in the coming weeks.

The MoHW reminds the public that measles is a highly contagious and serious viral illness with possible long-term complications. Symptoms typically start 7–21 days after contact with an infected person. The illness begins with fever, runny nose, red eyes, and a rash that starts at the hairline, spreads down to the chest, back, and limbs, and then to the rest of the body. Persons are contagious four days before and four days after the rash appears.

Measles is preventable through vaccination. The MMR vaccine is safe and highly effective, with two doses providing lifetime immunity. Belize recorded 87.9% vaccination coverage for MMR-1 in 2025. While the majority of the population is vaccinated against measles, 90% of unvaccinated persons will contract measles if exposed to this highly contagious disease.

Individuals who are not vaccinated are encouraged to visit the nearest health facility for more information or to receive the vaccine. Unvaccinated travelers should get vaccinated at least two weeks before travelling.

If you have fever and rash, please visit the nearest health facility for medical attention or call the Ministry of Health hotline at 0-800-MOH-CARE (0-800-664-2273).

The Ministry urges the public to protect their own health and the health of their community.

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