

MEASLES AND VACCINATION



- The measles vaccine was first licensed in **1963**, with an improved version introduced in 1968 (later combined into the MMR vaccine).
- The measles elimination strategy, prioritizing high vaccination coverage in school-age children, reduced U.S. cases to a **record low in 1981**. In 2000, the WHO declared **measles eliminated in the U.S.**, marking 12 months without continuous transmission—a milestone achieved through successful vaccination efforts.
- Since elimination, **imported cases** have periodically introduced measles in the U.S., primarily affecting unvaccinated communities. Maintaining high vaccination coverage remains critical.
- Among U.S. kindergartners, **vaccination rates fell** to approximately 93% during the 2020–21 and 2021–22 school years and remained nearly unchanged in 2022–23.
- Less than three months into 2025, measles cases have already **surpassed last year's total** of 285, with 95% in unvaccinated or unknown-status individuals. The majority are individuals 19 and younger, with the highest hospitalization rate among children under five. So far, 93% of cases have been outbreak-related, up from 69% in 2024.

When more than 95% of a community is vaccinated, measles spreads less easily, helping protect the community through **herd immunity**.

Reported Measles Cases in the United States from 1960 to 2025

