

## Bastrop County Public Health Department Flu and Measles Briefing Report

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) confirmed two measles cases in Gaines County (South Plains region of Texas). As of February, 58 cases have been reported in this region, and 13 patients have needed hospital care. Four of the reported cases were vaccinated for measles; the rest were either unvaccinated, or their vaccination status was unknown. Because measles spreads easily, more cases may happen in Gaines County and nearby communities. DSHS is working with South Plains Public Health District and Lubbock Public Health to learn more and help prevent further spread. For a visual aid to demonstrate the currently affected counties, please see the map below in [Appendix A](#). Please note that measles transmission can travel, and as this is an ongoing outbreak, the incidence can change.

### Texas Case Count by County\*

County	Cases
Gaines	45
Lubbock	1
Lynn	1
Terry	9
Yoakum	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

### Age Ranges of Measles Cases\*

Age Group	Number of Cases
0-4 years	15
5-17 years	33
18+ years	6
Pending	4

*\*The information in the above tables reflects the data available on February 18, 2025.*

Getting two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is the most effective way to stay protected against measles. If you have not been protected against measles or are unsure of your vaccination status, talk to your doctor about getting the MMR shot.

### What is Measles?

Measles is a very contagious disease that affects the lungs and can be serious or life-threatening for anyone not protected by a vaccine. It spreads when someone with measles coughs or sneezes, releasing tiny droplets into the air. The virus can stay in the air for up to

two hours after the infected person leaves the area. Up to 9 out of 10 unvaccinated people exposed to measles will get sick.

Symptoms usually start one to two weeks after being exposed. Early signs include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Koplik spots: Tiny white spots inside the mouth.

A few days later, a red, spotty rash appears on the face and then spreads down the neck, chest, and rest of the body. People with measles can spread it to others for about four days before the rash starts until about four days after it appears.

### **Who is at risk?**

- Children under 5 years old
- Children aged 5 to 17 years old
- Adults 20 years old and up
- Pregnant women
- People with weakened immune systems, such as from Leukemia and HIV infection

### **What to Do If You Think You Have Measles**

If you believe you have measles or have been exposed to someone with measles:

- Stay home and avoid contact with others to prevent spreading the virus.
- Call your health care provider before going in for a test. This way, plans can be made to see you without putting others at risk.

### **How to Protect Yourself**

The best way to prevent measles is to get the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two doses of the MMR vaccine prevent more than 97% of measles infections. Although a few vaccinated people might still get measles, they usually have milder symptoms and are less likely to pass measles on to others. DSHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that children get:

- One dose of MMR at 12–15 months old
- Another dose at 4–6 years old

Children too young for the vaccine have a higher risk of severe illness if they get measles. Each MMR shot lowers the chance of getting sick and can make the illness less severe if someone does become infected.

### **How to tell the difference between measles and chickenpox?**

Chickenpox (also known as varicella) usually starts with feeling tired and having a fever before a rash appears. However, some children may get a rash before they feel tired or develop a fever.

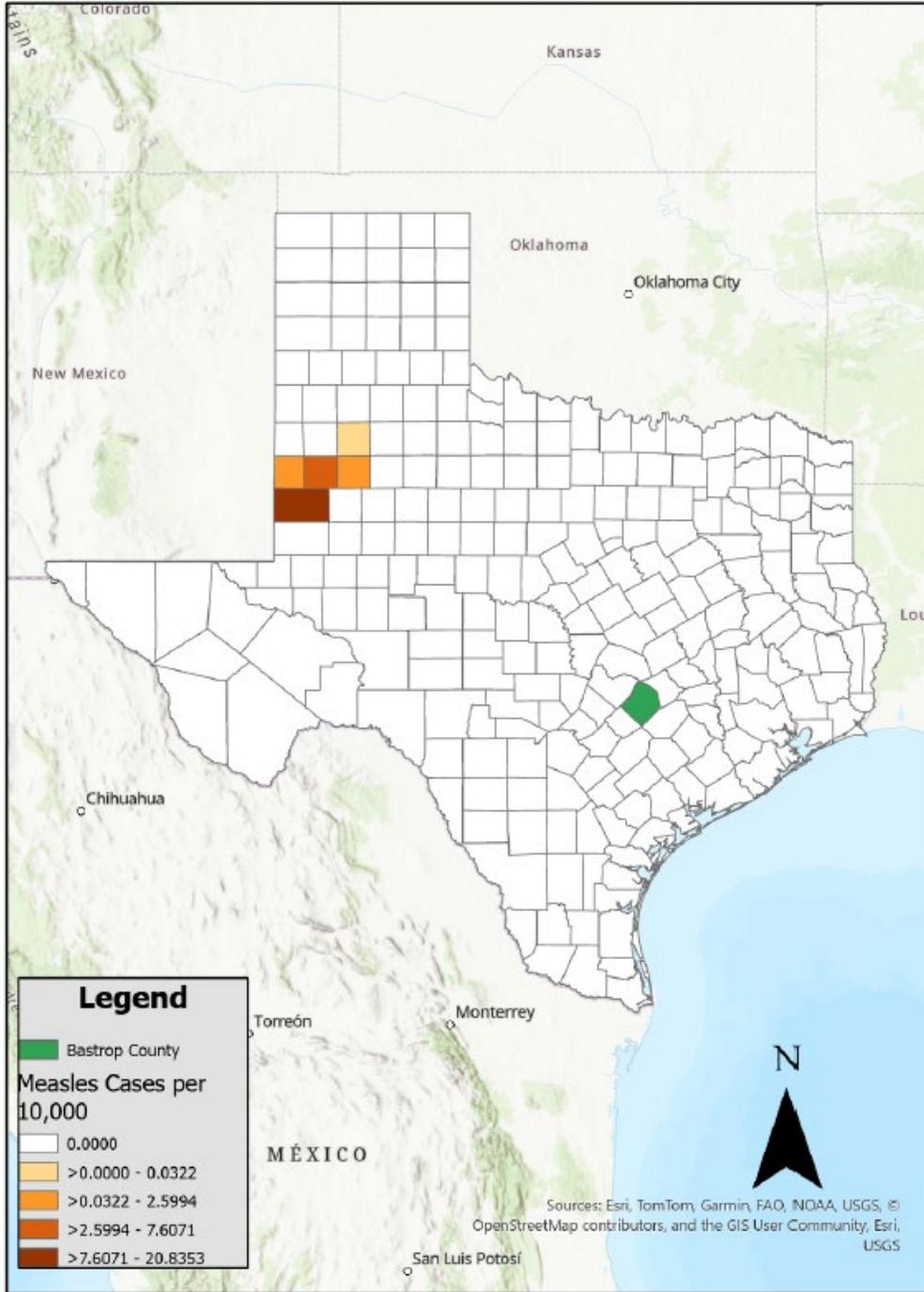
In people who aren't vaccinated for chickenpox, the illness goes through different stages very quickly: first the spots are flat, then they become raised bumps, then they turn into fluid-filled blisters, and finally they crust over.

***This is different from measles***, which often starts with a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. These symptoms usually show up before the rash. Measles rash usually starts on the face and spreads down the body. It begins with red, flat spots that might join together.

Sources: [CDC, 2024](#), [Texas DSHS, 2025](#)

# Appendix A

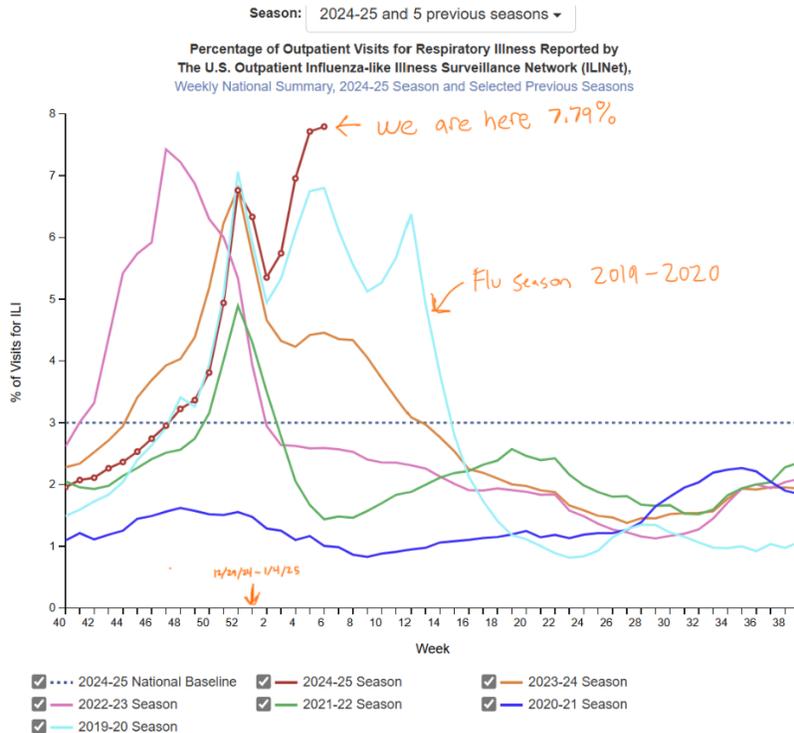
Map of Counties Affected by the Current Measles Outbreak, As of February 18th, 2025



Map made February 2025  
Map by Andrew Lam, MPH  
Bastrop County Public Health Department

## Flu National Update (As of February 8<sup>th</sup>, reported by CDC on February 14<sup>th</sup>)

We are currently in our flu season. We reached the peak of our flu activity this month, but flu activity is still high. The flu season is filled with a rollercoaster of highs and lows because of the changing weather, different strains receding, and other strains taking over.



### What is Influenza?

Influenza, or “flu,” is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.

### How Does Flu Spread?

- **Main way:** Through droplets when someone with the flu coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- **Less common way:** By touching a surface with the virus and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

### When is Flu Most Contagious?

People are most likely to spread flu during the **first 3 days** of their illness.

### Signs and Symptoms:

Flu symptoms come on quickly and include:

- Fever or chills
- Muscle aches and headaches

- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough, sore throat, and runny nose
- **In kids:** Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Most people feel better after **3–7 days**, but some can develop serious complications.

### **Why is Flu Dangerous?**

Flu can cause severe illness, especially in:

- Children under 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- Adults 65+ years old
- People with asthma or other health conditions

Complications can include dehydration, pneumonia, and life-threatening illnesses.

### **Treatment for Flu:**

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Use over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
- In some cases, doctors may prescribe antiviral medication.

### **How to Reduce Spreading Flu:**

1. **Get a flu shot every year:** Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated.
  - Babies under 6 months can't get the shot, so caregivers should get vaccinated.
2. **Wash your hands often.**
3. **Stay home if you're sick:** Stay home until your fever is gone for **24 hours**.
4. **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
5. **Avoid close contact with sick people.**

**Source:** U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, accessed 2/18/25.