



## State of New Jersey

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES**  
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
PO BOX 369  
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

[www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health)

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

MARY E. O'DOWD, M.P.H.  
*Commissioner*

### **Camp Professionals: What You Need to Know about Keeping Kids Healthy**

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This document provides guidance for both day and residential camp professionals on ways to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in their programs and facilities.

While in summer camp, children gather from different geographic locations spend many hours playing, eating, and sometimes sleeping together in close quarters. All this close contact provides the perfect opportunity for diseases to spread. There have been several instances of disease spread within the United States (US) that have impacted camp settings. In April 2009, the US was faced with consequences of the novel H1N1 virus. Then during 2009 – 2010, we were impacted by the largest mumps outbreak since 2006. More than 3000 cases were identified in the northeast US with approximately 300 cases in New Jersey. The initial case in the US was traced to an 11 year old child who attended a summer camp in New York State. The child contracted the disease while visiting the United Kingdom. Subsequently, other camp attendees and staff were reported to have mumps, and transmission continued in multiple locations when the camp attendees returned home. The outbreak continued for one year.

For the 2011 camp season, we are faced with measles. During January 1 to May 20, 2011, 118 cases of measles were reported in the US, the highest number reported for this period since 1996. Usually, there are approximately 50 cases of measles reported in the US for the entire year. Most of the recent cases were associated with international travel. There are outbreaks of measles in other countries including many European countries. France has been particularly affected by this outbreak with approximately 10,000 cases reported since the beginning of the year. Of the 118 US cases, 105 (89%) were associated with importation from other countries, including 46 importations (34 among US residents traveling abroad and 12 among foreign visitors). Of the 118, 105 (89%) patients were unvaccinated. Forty-seven (40%) patients were hospitalized and nine had pneumonia.

Measles is a highly contagious virus infection. It is so contagious that if one person has it, 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected with the measles virus. The virus lives in the nose and throat of an infected person and spreads when the person coughs or sneezes. The droplets can get into other people's noses or throats when they breathe or put their fingers in their mouth or nose after touching an infected surface. The virus can hang in the air or live on surfaces for two hours after an infected person is in the room.

Symptoms of measles begin somewhere between 7 -18 days after a person is infected. Symptoms include a blotchy rash; fever; cough; runny nose; red, watery eyes; feeling run down, achy; and tiny spots inside the mouth called Koplik's spots. Serious complications include inflammation of the brain and pneumonia.

For detailed information about measles, please visit the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' (NJDHSS) website at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/index.shtml>

**The best protection against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases is to make sure that all staff and campers are appropriately immunized.**

According to New Jersey Youth Camp Standards, N.J.A.C. 8:25 – 5.5, all campers must be immunized with the vaccinations required for child-care, preschool and school attendance, as appropriate for the camper's age. Children must be immunized in accordance with N.J.A.C. 8:57 – 4, Immunization of Pupils in Schools. Please visit the NJDHSS website at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/imm.shtml> to review immunization requirements. Please be aware that although NJ allows for medical or religious exemptions to vaccination, public health authorities may exclude unimmunized and under-immunized children and staff from camps and schools during a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak or threatened outbreak, as determined by the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services or her designee. All cases of measles infection and any outbreak or suspected outbreak must be immediately reported by camp administrators to the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the camp is located. For information about disease reporting requirements, please review the NJDHSS website at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/reporting.shtml>

Please be cognizant of the regulations and your responsibilities and be sure to communicate them to parents so that everyone is clear about their expectations.

In addition to vaccinations, below are some basic prevention steps for your staff and campers:

- **Promote frequent hand washing** preferably with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Camps shall have policies and procedures for hand washing. Camps with access to facilities with soap and water should consider the promotion of scheduled, frequent hand washing breaks for staff and campers – particularly prior to eating food. For camps without easy access to such facilities, consider the availability and access to alcohol-based hand sanitizer for staff and campers. Since children will not always wash their hands, camps should consider instituting specific hand washing breaks at multiple points through the day when everyone is required to wash their hands. This might include: the beginning of the day, before snack breaks, before lunch, etc. Staff and children should be educated on appropriate hand hygiene techniques. Information about hand washing is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/handwashing.shtml> and <http://www.cdc.gov/HandHygiene/index.html>
- **Promote good “cough etiquette.”** Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or practice the habit of coughing or sneezing into one's inner elbow if tissues are not available. Make sure to dispose of the used tissues properly by placing them in a garbage receptacle. Individuals should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after sneezing or coughing into a tissue. Staff and children should be educated on appropriate cough etiquette. Remember to include information on hand hygiene and cough etiquette in staff and camper orientation sessions and materials. Consider placing posters in campground buildings that reinforce prevention messages.
- **Stay at home if sick** and encourage parents to keep their children at home if they are sick. Parents must have contingency plans for child care when an ill child is excluded

from camp. Residential camps shall identify separate quarters to isolate individuals who have acute illness while infectious to others.

- **Discourage the sharing of eating utensils and straws.**
- **Clean and sanitize frequently-touched surfaces**, (such as desks, doorknobs, computer keyboards, toys) regularly and if they become visibly soiled. Cleaning products routinely used by the camp should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. Linens, eating utensils and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.

Only through your help can we prevent the spread of vaccine preventable diseases. For additional information, please see the additional resources listed below.

**Additional Resources:**

**New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Vaccine Preventable Disease Program**

Phone: 609-826-4861

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/vpdp/index.shtml>

**New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Public Health Sanitation and Safety Program**

Phone: 609-826-4941

<http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/phss/index.html>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
Homepage for Vaccines and Immunizations Site**

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>