Important Announcement Regarding Measles

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are top priorities at Triton College. With the Measles virus making local and national headlines, we feel it is important to share with you information about this virus and the college’s preventative measures that are always in place.

The Illinois Department of Public Health is working with the state’s local health departments to provide timely information about the spread of this virus. Officials from Triton College would be notified immediately by the Cook County Department of Public Health, if any additional steps are needed to protect students and staff against the Measles virus.

Here’s what you need to know about the Measles virus:

- Measles is still common in many parts of the world, including some countries in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. Travelers with measles continue to bring the disease into the U.S.A. Measles can spread when it reaches people who are under- or unvaccinated against the virus.

- Measles is a **highly contagious respiratory disease** caused by a virus. It spreads through the air through coughing and sneezing. With a sneeze or cough, droplets spray into the air and the droplets remain active and contagious in the air and on infected surfaces for up to two hours.

- People with measles are **contagious from 4 days before, through 4 days after rash onset**.

- Measles symptoms start with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat, and is followed by a rash that spreads all over the body.

- About 3 out of 10 people who get measles will develop one or more complications including; pneumonia, ear infections, diarrhea, and rarely encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

Recommendations:

- **Don’t wait to vaccinate.** Vaccinations are the safest, most effective way to protect you and your family from measles and other potentially dangerous communicable diseases. Anyone not already vaccinated against Measles, should get vaccinated at this time.

- Contact your doctor and make sure all **family members’ vaccinations are up to date**.

- **Children** should receive two doses of the measles vaccine known as MMR, a combination vaccine that provides protection against measles, mumps, and rubella: The **first dose** at 12-15 months of age and the **second dose** at 4-6 years of age. The MMR vaccine is strongly endorsed by medical and public health experts as safe and effective.

- **Adults** born during or after 1957 should receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine unless they have documented evidence of measles immunity or disease (through a blood test ordered by your physician).
When to call your doctor:

Call your healthcare provider or the Illinois Department of Public Health’s Measles hotline number (1-800-362-2736) immediately:

- If you are **unimmunized** and **were potentially exposed** and
- Have **symptoms** of a fever of 101°F or higher, cough, runny nose and red eyes with or without rash of tiny red spots that start at the head and spread to rest of body
- If you believe you may have been exposed to measles and are unimmunized and are experiencing symptoms, **please call, before entering, health clinics or emergency rooms, so staff can take precautions to help avoid further spread of the measles virus.**

To prevent any communicable diseases, we always stress with students and staff the importance of washing hands and covering mouths when coughing, and to stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, without the use of a fever reducing medicine.

If we learn of any updates regarding the Measles virus in Illinois, please know we would communicate with you immediately and take the necessary steps to keep our students and staff safe. For more information about the Measles virus and vaccines, please visit the following websites:

**Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH):**
http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/current-public-health-issues/measles

**Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH):**

**Center for Disease Control (CDC):**  www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html