

**Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
Alabama Emergency Response Technology (ALERT)
Health Alert Network (HAN)
Expanded testing for measles at The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL)
Now offering in-house PCR testing for the measles virus
February 19, 2026**

Alabama's State Public Health Laboratory (The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories/(BCL) now offers in-house testing for measles viral RNA by reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) at the Prattville laboratory. By eliminating the need to ship specimens out of state, the turnaround time for these in-house PCR results will be lowered to 1-3 days, which is expected to improve the epidemiologic investigation and reduce the likelihood of continued transmission. Faster case identification will also improve options for effective post-exposure prophylaxis.

As of February 12, 2026, 910 confirmed measles cases had been reported in the United States across 24 jurisdictions in the first 7 weeks of 2026. For the full year of 2025, 2,280 confirmed measles cases were reported in the United States by 45 jurisdictions. The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) announced its first case of measles since 2002 in August 2025. The individual had travelled internationally. At this time, ADPH reports only one case of measles in Alabama.

Testing for measles at the State Lab (BCL) will serve to assist in protecting the health of Alabama's citizens.

Stay Alert for Measles Cases: IDENTIFY, ISOLATE and INFORM

- I. **IDENTIFY:** Identify a measles suspect, to include everywhere they have been in the previous 3 weeks (to include travel history), and vaccination status.
- II. **ISOLATE:** Once a suspect is identified, ensure that Measles Control Measures are in place to protect other patients and unprotected staff in the waiting rooms, hallways, and clinic areas.
<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/immunization/measles.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/measles/index.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/php/measles-healthcare-response/index.html>
- III. **INFORM:** Immediately report suspected measles case to ADPH as is required by law (1-800-469-4599).

IV. Request for Testing:

a. The method for requesting testing will remain through ADPH for consultation and approval prior to specimen submission via 1-800-469-4599 or Measles Consultation Form for Testing.

b. If testing at the BCL is not approved by ADPH, the provider can opt to utilize private laboratories but must notify ADPH.

<https://epiweb.adph.state.al.us/redcap/surveys/index.php?s=K494KKTAKC>

V. Testing approved at the BCL:

a. RT-PCR provides a relatively rapid and sensitive method for case confirmation. It is important to collect a specimen as soon as possible after rash onset, as viral shedding declines over time after rash onset (substantially after 10 days).

b. Submit nasopharyngeal swab AND urine specimen.

I. Nasopharyngeal swabs should be placed in viral transport media.

II. A urine specimen should be placed in a sterile cup. Urine RT-PCR used with a nasopharyngeal swab may improve test sensitivity, especially at the end of the RT-PCR detection window; however, the urine specimen alone is not preferred for case confirmation.

c. For more information on storage and shipment, please see the Analyte List on the BCL Homepage:

www.alabamapublichealth.gov/bcl

Contact the BCL at 334-290-6130 or email CLAB@adph.state.AL.US with additional questions about specimen collection and shipping/transportation.

Additional resources:

[CDC Measles Cases and Outbreaks](https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html)-<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html>

[CDC Measles Clinical Diagnosis Fact Sheet](https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/communication-resources/clinical-diagnosis-fact-sheet.html)-

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