

Foothills Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Confirmed Measles Case Identified in Rutherford County

Rutherford County, NC — January 9th, 2026 — The Rutherford County Health Department has confirmed the county's first measles case in a partially vaccinated child. The child is currently recovering, and public health officials are actively working to identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed.

Potential exposures may have occurred while the family attended church services at Mountain Creek Baptist Church in Gilkey on Sunday, January 4th, 2026. Individuals who were present during services on that date may have been exposed.

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness that spreads through coughing and sneezing and can remain in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. Symptoms typically include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, followed by a rash.

The Rutherford County Health Department is working closely with state and regional public health partners to monitor the situation and limit further spread.

What the Public Should Know

- People who are not fully vaccinated are at the highest risk for measles
- Individuals who attended services at Mountain Creek Baptist Church on January 4th, 2026, should monitor for symptoms through January 25th, 2026
- Anyone who develops symptoms should call ahead before seeking medical care to help prevent potential exposure to others

Vaccination Information

The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine is safe and highly effective at preventing measles. The health department encourages residents to:

- Ensure they and their children are up to date on MMR vaccination
- Contact the health department if they are unsure of their vaccination status, 2 doses of the MMR vaccine is required for full vaccinated

MMR vaccines are available through the Rutherford County Health Department for both adults and children.

Residents with questions about possible exposure, symptoms, or vaccination status are encouraged to contact the Rutherford County Health Department at 828-287-6100.

Additional updates will be shared as information becomes available.

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