

VANDERBILT MEDICAL LABORATORIES

Measles Testing

Situation: The United States is currently experiencing a measles virus outbreak.

Background: Measles symptoms include fever, cough, conjunctivitis, and exanthem. Prompt testing of suspected cases is essential for early diagnosis and public health measures.

Assessment: VML facilitates testing for acute measles through the Acute Measles Panel, available in EPIC on May 14, 2025.

Acute Measles Panel ✓ Accept

Collect acute-phase (i.e. IgM) serum and throat or nasopharyngeal swab as soon as possible upon suspicion of measles. IgM may be negative in first 3 days after rash onset. PCR detection of measles is most successful when specimens collected in days 1-3 after rash onset, but may be successful as late as 14 days. Patients suspected of measles must be placed in isolation precautions.

☐ Measles by PCR-TDOH

☐ Measles (Rubeola) IgM-ARUP

☐ Measles (Rubeola) IgG/IgM-ARUP

☒ Initiate airborne precautions

Routine, Continuous, Starting today at 1329, Until Specified

Next Required ✓ Accept

Priority testing is indicated for:

1. Patients with clinical signs and symptoms of measles virus infection.

Recommendations:

Collect and submit samples as instructed and indicated above to the laboratory. PCR testing requires approval from Infection Prevention (615-835-1205). All patients with measles orders to diagnose an acute infection must have airborne precautions initiated.

Point of Contact:

Laboratory testing questions can be referred to microbiology fellow on call. Infection prevention questions can be referred to the IP on call.

Resources:

Measles Toolkit, Tennessee Department of Health, 2025: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/reportable-diseases/measles/2025_Measles_Toolkit_Final.pdf *Should I Test for Measles?*, Tennessee Department of Health, 2024: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/measles/2024_Measles_Provider_Algorithm.pdf

Other useful information and links: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/reportable-diseases/measles-rubeola.html>

Questions? Call Lab Customer Service at 615-875-5227 (5-LABS)