A MESSAGE TO PARENTS from the Oregon Pediatric Society, the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

February 2019

The recent measles outbreak in Clark County, Washington, and Multnomah County, Oregon, has caused concern and uncertainty among parents of vaccinated and unvaccinated children. The Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS) encourages all families to follow the AAP’s recommended vaccine schedule and learn the signs and symptoms of measles.

OPS agrees with scientific evidence that shows vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines save lives.

Because maternal antibodies provide some protection, your child’s first dose of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine isn’t recommended until they are 12 months old. They will usually receive their booster dose between age four to five. The two doses of the MMR vaccine are 97% effective against measles.

To prevent their infants from catching the highly contagious measles virus in public, some parents have asked whether they should vaccinate babies younger than 12 months. If there is a higher risk of infants being exposed to measles, such as international travel, they can receive the MMR vaccine as early as 6 months. However, the vaccine is less effective if given before 12 months of age so this does not count as a baby’s first dose. Children will still need to be vaccinated with dose one at 12 months of age, and a second dose later to be fully protected.

If you are concerned about measles exposure, reach out to your child’s primary care provider to inquire about early vaccination, and any fees that may be charged if there is no insurance coverage. Please contact your doctor’s office or the Oregon Health Authority Measles Information Line at 2-1-1 immediately if you think your child has measles. Additionally, make sure all members of your family, including older children, adolescents, and adults, have been vaccinated. It is never too late to protect your family.

For more information about measles protection from the AAP, please see:
