

SEPTEMBER

Nurse Newsletter

DATES TO KNOW



Sep. 15 – I-Smile Pre-K

Sep. 16– Lion's Club Vision
Screens Pre-K

Sep. 22 – Glow Walk for
Suicide Prevention

Sep. 29 – AEA Hearing Checks
for Kindergarten and 2nd
grade

Oct. 7– Iowa Healthiest State
Walk

REMINDERS

If your child's immunizations are not up to date, please have the required vaccinations completed with your child's family physician or contact Decatur County Public Health for assistance.

Provisional notices will be sent home this week for students who are missing required vaccinations.

Please also remember:

- Kindergarten students need current lead, vision, dental, and physical screenings.
- 3rd grade students need an up-to-date vision screening.

Thank you for helping us keep our students healthy and ready to learn!

The poster is for a 'GLOW WALK' event. At the top left is the 'INFINITY HEALTH' logo with the tagline 'Your Health. Our Purpose. No Limits.' and 'an IowaHealth partner'. To its right is the Decatur County Public Health logo with the tagline 'PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.'. The main title 'Decatur County GLOW WALK' is in large, colorful, glowing letters. Below it, a subtitle reads 'TO BEGIN AWARENESS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION'. The date and time are 'TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 22ND 2026' and '5:00 PM – 8:00 PM'. The location is 'DECATUR COUNTY CONSERVATION SAVANNAH HILLS LEARNING CENTER, 19852 Lakeview Rd, Leon, IA 50144'. A circular inset photo shows people walking at night with glow sticks. A box says 'FREE TO ATTEND WITH COMPLIMENTARY GLOW STICKS!'. A heart icon is next to the text 'INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND TEAMS ARE ENCOURAGED TO WEAR BRIGHT COLORS OR SOMETHING HONORING LOVED ONES LOST TO SUICIDE.' A purple ribbon icon is next to 'YOU ARE NOT ALONE Help is here.' Below, a music icon is next to 'MUSIC BY COUNTRYSIDE ENTERTAINMENT' and a face painting icon is next to 'FACE PAINTING BY DeLaney's Party Paints'. At the bottom, logos for 'Spoonful OF SUGAR', 'Summer Squeeze', and 'DECATUR COUNTY CATTLEMAN'S ASSOCIATION' are shown. The footer reads 'PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.'

NURSE CONTACT INFORMATION

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UNDERSTANDING MEASLES:

A Simple Guide for Parents and Our School Community



By Heather Boswell RN, BSN

Measles is back in the news, and we want to make sure our families have the simple facts. Measles is a strong virus, but it is easy to prevent when we work together. Here is what you need to know to keep our school and community safe, based on guidelines from [Iowa Health and Human Services \(Iowa HHS\)](#).

1 HOW MEASLES SPREADS

Measles is one of the most contagious viruses in the world. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.



It moves fast: If a person who is not vaccinated is near someone with measles, 9 out of 10 times they will catch it.



It stays in the air: The virus can hang in the air and land on surfaces. It can stay dangerous for **up to 2 hours** after an infected person leaves the room.



It spreads before you see a rash: A person can spread measles to others **4 days before** their rash shows up and **4 days after** it appears.



It takes time to show: Symptoms usually start **7 to 14 days** after a person is exposed to the virus.

3 VACCINES AND IOWA SCHOOL RULES

The MMR vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) is the best protection against the virus.

1 DOSE

Gives about 93% protection against measles.



2 DOSES

Gives about 97% protection against measles.



IOWA SCHOOL RULE:

All students must have 2 doses of the MMR vaccine to attend school in Iowa.



DID YOU KNOW?

If an unvaccinated person is exposed to measles, getting an MMR shot within **3 days (72 hours)** can help stop them from getting sick!

2 WHAT TO LOOK FOR: MEASLES SYMPTOMS

Measles starts out looking like a bad cold, but it gets worse over time.

STEP 1: EARLY SYMPTOMS (DAYS 1-4)

It starts with a very high fever (sometimes up to **103°F–105°F**) and the “**3 Cs**”:

- Cough
- Coryza (a very runny or stuffed nose)
- Conjunctivitis (red, watery, swollen eyes)



You might also see tiny white spots on the inside of the cheeks.

STEP 2: THE MEASLES RASH

A few days after the fever starts, a red rash breaks out.

- It starts at the face and hairline.
- It spreads downward to the neck, chest, arms, legs, and feet.
- The rash looks like flat red spots and raised bumps.



4 WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT SHOWS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL?

If a child comes to the school health office with a high fever and a rash, we follow five quick steps:



1 Keep the student separate: We move them into a private room away from other students immediately.



2 Wear a mask: We give the student a mask to wear to stop droplets from spreading.



3 Call parents (with a special note): We call parents to pick up their child right away. We ask parents to **call their doctor before going in** so the doctor's office can prepare for them.



4 Call public health: We call local public health officials and the Iowa Department of Health right away to report the case.



5 Clear the room: We keep the clinic room empty for **at least 2 hours** so the air can clear safely.



TOGETHER, WE CAN PROTECT OUR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY.

Thank you for helping keep our school a healthy place to learn!



Questions?

Contact your healthcare provider or Decatur County Public Health.

KEY UPDATES:



IOWA HHS SCHOOL EXCLUSION GUIDELINES



Iowa Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) updated its childhood illness exclusion guidance in **August 2026** to simplify return-to-school rules for families and staff.



GENERAL SYMPTOM CHANGES



FEVER THRESHOLD: Streamlined to **100.4°F** for all ages. Students can return after being fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. Documented chronic conditions causing a fever do not require exclusion.



VOMITING: Students stay home if they vomit more than twice in 24 hours. They may return once vomiting resolves overnight and food/liquids are tolerated in the morning.



DIARRHEA: Exclude while ill; students can return once diarrhea is overall improving (bloody stool requires a medical evaluation first).



SKIN SORES: Exclude only if draining fluid cannot be contained by a bandage.



UPDATED DISEASE RETURN TIMELINES

STREP THROAT



Return **12 HOURS** after starting antibiotics if symptoms improve.

(Reduced from 24 hours)

IMPETIGO



Return **12 HOURS** after starting antibiotics if sores are covered.

(Reduced from 24 hours)

PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)



Return after **5 DAYS** of antibiotics or **21 DAYS** after the cough started.

MEASLES



Return **4 DAYS** after rash onset, once symptoms improve, and only on a date specified by public health.



HEALTHY STUDENTS, STRONGER SCHOOLS!

When in doubt, keep your child home and contact your healthcare provider or local public health office for guidance.



Thank you for helping keep our school community healthy and safe!