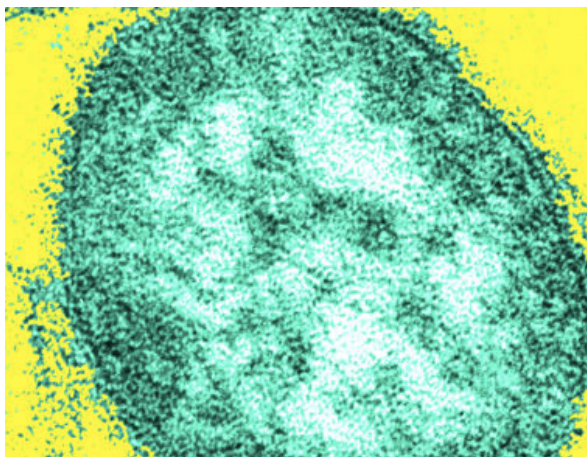


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Utah measles outbreak cost \$300,000

Published on [October 25, 2011](#) by [Paul Tinder](#)



Measles

According to research presented at the annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, a small outbreak of measles in Utah ended up costing local and state coffers approximately \$300,000.

The outbreak, which occurred in Salt Lake County, Utah, at the end of March and the first part of April this year involved just nine cases but required officials to trace thousands of contacts, review immunization records of hospital workers and teachers, give post-exposure prophylaxis to nearly 400 people and isolate 200 others, MedPage Today reports.

Karyn Leniek, Utah's deputy state epidemiologist, said that the cost was approximately \$33,000 per case, which does not take into account indirect costs, diagnosis and treatment covered by individual insurance, school system losses or loss of income by quarantined individuals.

During the same IDSA session, Huong McLean of the CDC reported that 2011 has seen the highest number of U.S. cases of measles since 1996, with 214 cases in 16 outbreaks across the country. This compares with 28,000 cases in Europe this year, according to MedPage Today.

McLean said that measles can still be regarded as eliminated in the U.S. because most of the outbreaks were sparked by importations from outside the country. On the other hand, McLean said that 84 percent of the 187 U.S. resident cases were either unvaccinated or had unknown vaccination status and another nine percent only had a single dose of vaccine.

The Utah outbreak began when an unvaccinated youngster picked up the disease during a trip to Europe. The findings of the Utah study may allow for a new public health approach to vaccination.

"A lot of this is driven by people who don't want to be vaccinated," Barbara Alexander of Duke University said, according to MedPage Today. "Maybe we should start saying, 'You're costing us money.' This is a huge public health burden."

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