

IMMUNIZATION Update

March 28 | 700 words | 3 - minute read



Question of the week

How concerned should we be about the current measles outbreak?



The U.S. is currently facing one of the largest measles outbreaks in the past decade, although the number of reported cases is fewer compared to the peak years of 2014, which saw 667 cases, and 2019, with 1,274 cases. As of March 21, **64 cases have been reported** across 17 states this year compared to only 58 cases total for the year 2023.

According to data from the CDC, the number of cases remained relatively low in 2023, with no more than two cases per week reported until mid-September of last year. Since then, the frequency of reported cases has escalated, with at least two cases documented every week since December 12. [Click or tap here for details.](#)

An analysis of measles cases from 2001 to 2023 reveals that the median age of affected individuals is 10 years old. Of note, 69% of cases were among unvaccinated people, emphasizing the importance of vaccination in preventing measles outbreaks.

People traveling to the U.S. accounted for 20% of cases, and the majority of cases were acquired in the country. Maintaining high vaccination rates remains crucial to curbing the spread of this highly contagious disease.

Recognizing the differences between allergies and respiratory infection

This time of year, patients are presenting with symptoms that may be an infection or a seasonal allergy. Distinguishing between

allergies and a respiratory infection can be challenging because they share similar symptoms. Here is a breakdown to help you and your communities differentiate between the two:



Onset and Duration:

- Allergies typically have a seasonal pattern or occur after exposure to specific triggers like pollen, dust or pet dander. Symptoms can persist as long as you are exposed to the allergen.
- Respiratory infections, such as the common cold or flu, often have a sudden onset and tend to improve within a week to 10 days. However, symptoms can last longer in some cases, especially with the flu.

Symptoms:

- **Allergies:** Common symptoms include sneezing, itchy or watery eyes, runny or stuffy nose and sometimes a cough. Itchy throat and skin are also typical.
- **Respiratory Infections:** Symptoms can include a sore throat, cough, congestion, runny nose, fever, body aches, fatigue and sometimes headache.

Consult a healthcare provider if you are unsure whether you have allergies or a respiratory infection.

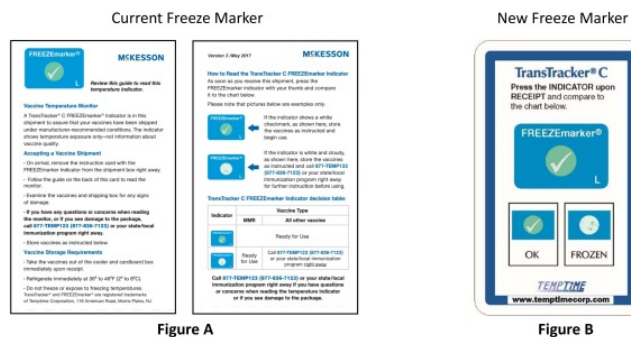
[Take a look at the CDC's recommended respiratory virus guidance.](#)

[Download a respiratory virus guidance infographic.](#)

Freeze marker update for vaccine providers

Beginning the week of March 18, the McKesson Distribution Center will temporarily begin shipping refrigerated coolers using one of two different cold temperature indicator cards. Coolers may contain the familiar FREEZEmarker indicator card ([FIG A](#)) or may contain a new indicator card called TransTracker ([Fig B](#)).

See below for examples of the current cold temperature indicator card (Figure A) and the new *TransTracker* (Figure B).



Both indicator cards utilize the same temperature indicator that is currently in use. The sole distinction lies in the design of the indicator card itself. Providers **will not** receive both monitors in the same cooler.

Please ensure that providers follow the same process for checking for any temperature excursions similar to [using the directions in Figure A](#).

ICYMI: March is National Women's History Month

As we celebrate National Women's History Month this March, it's a fitting time to recognize the remarkable contributions of women in various fields, including healthcare. Throughout history, women have played pivotal roles in advancing public



health, particularly in the field of vaccinations and immunizations.

From pioneering scientists like [Marie Curie](#) to the key scientist behind the COVID-19 vaccine, [Kizzmekia Corbett](#), women have been instrumental in developing, promoting and administering vaccines that protect against deadly diseases. Their dedication, expertise and tireless efforts have saved countless lives and shaped the course of public health initiatives worldwide.

Join us in expressing gratitude for their invaluable contributions to the health and well-being of communities everywhere.



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