

# Unprotected People #11

## Measles

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### Measles outbreak associated with an unvaccinated population

*Although the information in the article entitled, "An Outbreak of Measles Associated with an Unvaccinated Population," is two years old, it highlights the timeless fact that members of unvaccinated communities, such as the religious community in which this outbreak occurred, continue to be victims of vaccine-preventable diseases.*

*This Minnesota story on a measles outbreak appeared in the February/March 1996 issue of the Minnesota Department of Health's Disease Control Newsletter. Shortly after the outbreak, most of the unvaccinated children and young adults in this religious community consequently chose to receive two doses of MMR vaccine.*

*The "Outbreak Summary" section of the article is reprinted here in its entirety:*

In early 1996, two measles cases were reported to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). After a major resurgence of measles both nationally and in Minnesota during 1988–1991, Minnesota had been measles-free since July 1992. During the course of the 1996 case investigations, additional cases that had gone undetected by the medical community were identified with rash onsets dating back to December 6, 1995. During this outbreak, 14 laboratory-confirmed cases and 13 probable cases were reported to MDH. Of the 27 cases, two were Wis-

consin residents. The last known rash onset was January 29, 1996. The majority of cases (17; 63%) occurred in persons 20–29 years of age, three were over 30 years of age, six were 10–19 years of age, and one case was an 18-month-old child. All but one of the cases were associated with a religious community whose members live in the St. Paul area and operate a community school. It is not clear how the virus entered this community. Of the 25 Minnesota residents, 22 had not received vaccination against measles. One (an 18-month-old infant) had a documented history of receiving measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine; one (a 25-year-old) had a probable vaccination history; and for one (a 35-year-old), the vaccination history remains unknown.

Many of the children and young adults (70%) in the religious community had not been immunized before onset of this outbreak; most have since received two doses of MMR. Two of the laboratory-confirmed cases occurred outside the religious community in a 35-year-old receptionist at a medical clinic where one of the cases had been treated, and in a 44-year-old woman residing in Hennepin County. This second case had no apparent association or exposure to the religious community.