

In Three Months, US Measles Cases Surpass 2018 Numbers

Most people who contracted the disease were unvaccinated and some state legislatures are now considering whether to curtail nonmedical vaccine exemptions.

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The number of measles cases in the US so far this year has exceeded the total in 2018 to become the second highest since 2000, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [reported](#) yesterday (April 1). At 387, the count in the first three months of this year surpassed the 372 cases recorded last year, and most people who have contracted the disease were not vaccinated.

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Fifteen states have reported cases of the disease, and outbreaks, defined as three or more cases, are ongoing in parts of New York, California, Washington, and New Jersey. Several of the outbreaks began with unvaccinated travelers returning from other parts of the world where outbreaks are occurring, including Israel, Ukraine, and the Philippines, according to the CDC.

See “[Measles Outbreak Worsens in Washington State](#)”

In 2018, measles cases in Europe surged to the highest level in a decade with almost 83,000 people contracting the disease, according to a [tally](#) by the World Health Organization. “Europe is even worse now than North America,” [Peter Hotez](#), who studies infectious disease at the Baylor College of Medicine, tells [The Washington Post](#). “This is all the new normal. Nobody ever thought we’d ever be at this place.”

See “[Measles Cases Rise in Outbreaks in Ukraine, Philippines](#)”

Hotez and colleagues conducted a [study](#) to identify areas at risk for measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases because of vaccine refusal. Half of the 15 counties in the US where the most nonmedical vaccine exemptions occur are now reporting outbreaks of measles, he tells the *Post*. Several