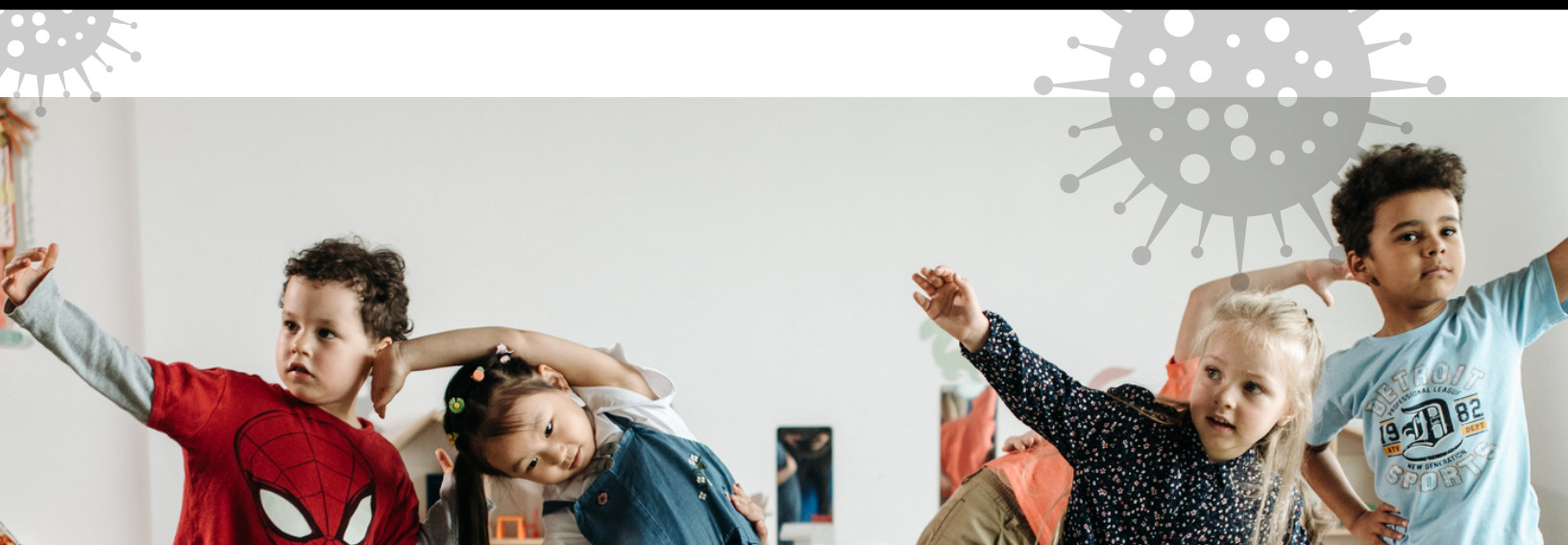


Counties: Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Paulding, Polk, Walker



Public Health Reporting and Resources for School Nurses



Northwest Public Health District

1309 Redmond Road, NW

Rome, GA 30165-9655

Phone: 706-295-6656 option 0

Fax: 706-802-5342

www.nwgapublichealth.org

To view the most updated hours for our local health departments, please scan the QR code or click the link below:

<https://nwgapublichealth.org/counties/>



*Hours are subject to change.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Northwest Public Health District contact information and website links to county health department hours. 1

How to Report Notifiable Diseases

What must be reported, how diseases are reported, who they should be reported to, and follow up requirements. 3

Outbreak

The general definition of an outbreak, as well as criteria for measles, RSV, influenza, and other outbreaks. 4

Vaccine Preventables

What vaccine-preventable diseases are, where to find the childhood vaccine schedule, and what to do if a child tests positive. 5

FAQ

Frequently asked questions regarding reporting, public health recommendations, and other common questions. 6

Quick Links Toolkit

Resources from GA DPH, CDC, and CHOA regarding common childhood illnesses and conditions. 8

How to Report Notifiable Diseases

All Georgia physicians, laboratories, and other health care providers are required by law (OCGA 31-12-2) to report patients with suspected/confirmed cases of notifiable disease

What Must Be Reported

- Both clinical diagnoses and laboratory-confirmed cases of notifiable diseases are reportable
- Suspect cases as well as confirmed ones, especially for diseases that require immediate public health actions
- For a list of ND diseases, see NOTIFIABLE DISEASE CONDITION REPORTING in the Toolkit.
- **All reports should include patient demographics (name, date of birth, home address, phone number, and parent name if child), copy of lab result or the name of the facility the patient was tested at, and last day the patient was at school.**

To Whom and How

- Report to the Northwest Public Health District
 - Phone: 706-295-6656 Option 0- ***preferred method for school nurses & school staff**
 - Staff will ask you the illness you are reporting and what county your facility is in and what county the patient lives in
 - Fax: 706-802-5342
 - After-Hours Public Health Hotline: 1-866-782-4584
 - **This number is for urgent public health issues and emergencies only**
 - Examples include:
 - Reporting a suspect measles case
 - Please use this line only for time sensitive public health concern or public health urgency

Following Up and Additional Requirements

- Once a case is reported, public health staff may conduct further investigation and follow up per our policies and procedures including contact tracing, diagnosis confirmation, and laboratory follow-up.
- Please provide any additional information you are able to obtain to support the reporting and response efforts as this will speed up the process so that our staff can confirm illness and/or give public health recommendations in a timely manner.
- We do receive rumor calls about cases and can follow up if it is a notifiable condition reportable to public health and/or is outbreak related. Please ensure we are provided with the patient's name, date of birth, facility that tested/diagnosed the patient, and the disease or illness that the patient might have.

Outbreaks

General Outbreak Definition

- Two or more people with a similar illness following a documented common exposure within the state of GA.
- Common exposures may include consumption of a common food item, attendance at the same event, or close contact in a classroom or extracurricular activity.
- Illnesses occurring among students at the same school are considered to be an outbreak if it is clear that more than one student was exposed at the same time, or the number of illnesses is greater than what is expected.

Measles Outbreak Definition

- 1 case is considered an outbreak. If you get a report of a case or a suspect case of measles, please report it to our office immediately by calling 706-295-6656 and press option 0. If it is during afterhours please call 1-866-PUB-HLTH to report.
- For more information regarding measles, please visit or scan the QR code listed in Toolkit: <https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/acute-disease-epidemiology/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles>

Reporting Outbreaks of Seasonal Influenza, RSV, and Other Common Conditions

- An increase in seasonal influenza or RSV above the expected level or normal occurrence for your facility, classroom, or group during a given period is an outbreak.
- We also encourage school staff to report the situations below:
 - Rapid increases in absenteeism related to respiratory illness
 - Absenteeism at 10% or more schoolwide in a short period of time (1-3 days)
 - Multiple epidemiologically linked cases within a classroom or cohort
 - Severe illness, hospitalization, or unusual disease patterns
 - Concerns for ongoing transmission that may require public health guidance

Additional Information

- If you have any questions or need to report an outbreak or situation, please call our office at 706-295-6656 option 0 and staff will assist you.

Vaccine Preventables

Vaccines are available for diseases like chickenpox, hepatitis A and B, measles, and whooping cough (pertussis), among many others listed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/by-disease/index.html>

Routine vaccines prevent serious illness and hospitalization and are an important part of childhood disease prevention. See common questions about vaccine preventable diseases below.

Where can I find the most up-to-date childhood vaccination schedule?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) posts a yearly updated vaccine schedule based on age and risk factors you can view by clicking the link or scanning the QR code.
 - https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/immunizations/?srsltid=AfmBOopMfMzzkUA_wvxOLRWcfqzFzd1ExR45JJnaUIP-vWUCYgWh6Ukm



What do I do if a child has a vaccine-preventable infection?

- Report confirmed and suspect cases to the Northwest Public Health District.
- Follow school sick policy, nursing guidelines and recommendations.
- Stay in contact with public health staff as we may have additional recommendations which could include sending out a public health letter to parents, monitoring specific at-risk exposed individuals, and restricting the sick child from returning to school.

Who is considered “at-risk” for vaccine-preventable diseases/infections?

- Those most at-risk for vaccine-preventable diseases include individuals who are not up-to-date on their vaccinations.
- In general, individuals who are immunocompromised, pregnant, older, younger, or who work in healthcare professions are more at risk of contracting infectious diseases.

Other resources for vaccine-preventable diseases

- The Travel Vaccine Recommendations for Infants and Children can be viewed by clicking the link or scanning the QR code:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/yellow-book/hcp/family-travel/travel-vaccine-recommendations-for-infants-and-children.html>



Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find guidance on common childhood illnesses?

- The GA Department of Early Care and Learning in conjunction with the GA Department of Public Health and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta have a chart titled "Common Infectious Illnesses" that can be referenced for general guidance, click the link or scan the QR code.
 - <https://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CommonInfectiousDiseaseChart.pdf>



What should I do if a parent reports a child with a notifiable disease that is reportable to public health?

- If staff from our office have not already contacted staff at your facility, please contact our office and our staff can verify if we have received the report and if we have any specific recommendations. Some parents do not return calls to our staff and we may not know what school/childcare center the child attends. Other times, you may be the first to report the child's condition to our office. Many reports are delayed and some may not be reported at all.

What illnesses are currently in our community?

- There are some websites that have detailed information on illnesses by county. GA DPH has viral respiratory disease reports during respiratory season and the CDC has a Respiratory Illness Data Channel website. Other times, you may need to call our office and speak to one of our epidemiologists.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data/index.html>
 - <https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/acute-disease-epidemiology/viral-respiratory-diseases>



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the most common outbreaks that are reported in our district in school settings?

- GI illnesses including norovirus (stomach flu).
- Respiratory/Rash Illnesses including seasonal Influenza, COVID-19, Pertussis, and Chickenpox.

What should I know about norovirus in school setting?

- Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that can spread quickly because only a small number of viral particles are needed to cause infection and the virus can survive on surfaces for days to weeks if not properly cleaned and disinfected.
- Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea, and stomach cramps. Some individuals may also have a low-grade fever, headache, body aches, or fatigue.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant effective against norovirus or a freshly prepared chlorine bleach solution.
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-antimicrobial-products-registered-epa-claims-against-norovirus-feline>



What are some ways that we can reduce illness in our school?

- Teach how to wash hands appropriately and when to wash hands.
- Use respiratory etiquette with covering cough and sneeze.
- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect commonly touched items regularly.
- Follow school sick policy.
- Encourage parents to talk to their provider about vaccinations.
- Take steps for cleaner air at your facility.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/children-and-school-preparedness/infection-prevention/actions.html>



What should I do if a child has an animal bite?

- For consultation on animal bites, contact the Georgia Poison Center, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 404-616-9000 or contact your local environmental health office for guidance.

Quick Links Toolkit

**To view the GA Department of Early Care and Learning
Communicable Disease Chart, please visit:**

<https://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CommunicableDiseaseChart.pdf>



**To view the CDC, Everyday Actions for Schools to
Prevent and Control the Spread of Infections website,
please visit:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/children-and-school-preparedness/infection-prevention/actions.html>



**To view the GA Department of Public Health, Measles
website, please visit:**

<https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/acute-disease-epidemiology/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles>



**To view the full list of notifiable diseases, access the
notifiable disease reporting form, and find District
Health Office locations, please visit:**

<https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/disease-reporting>



**To view the GA Department of Public Health, Influenza
website, please visit:**

<https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/influenza>



For more information about disease reporting, please visit the link below:

<https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/disease-reporting>