

Wesley Faulds

Measles Outbreak Hits U.S.

The latest updates

One of the most contagious viruses in the world is spreading around the United States, affecting Texas, New Mexico, New Jersey, and six other states.

Measles is an airborne, highly contagious disease that can be very severe. It primarily affects children but can occur in people of all ages. High fever, cough, runny nose, and sore throat are all signs of Measles. Most symptoms of measles appear between 7 to 21 days after exposure, Public Health said.

“Measles is easily spread from person to person. If one person has it, up to 9 out of 10 people nearby will become infected if they are not protected,” said Dr. Eric Chow, Communicable Disease Chief for Public Health. We are seeing increases in measles cases within and outside the US. Talk to your doctor about checking your vaccination status and get vaccinated now if you aren’t already protected.”

The agency explained the measles, bumps, and rubella (MMR) is highly effective, with two doses providing almost 97% protection. Even though measles is currently spreading in multiple states throughout the United States, there is very little chance of getting the disease. Many diagnoses are quickly treated, a measles is generally not a deadly virus.



Above: Sadly, the Texas Department of State Health Services has reported the first death resulting from the outbreak. The death occurred to a young child who was not vaccinated.



Above: The first U.S. penny was issued in 1793 and featured the head of a woman with flowing hair to symbolize liberty. This coin was made up until 1859, when the Indian Head design was produced. This penny was manufactured until 1909, when the Lincoln Wheat Cent was made; this design was kept to the present day and is also pictured above.

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Trump Calls for End to Penny Production

At the 2025 Super Bowl on February 9, President Donald Trump announced online that he was going to be halting the production of pennies. He put this plan into action to hopefully reduce the money the United States was spending on minting its coins; the buying power of the penny has long been absent, as prices go up and online and credit card payment methods become more popular and common. In fact, it currently costs more than 4 cents to produce one penny.

Fans of the penny stated its usefulness for tips and people who don’t own or use credit cards, and compared it to the nickel, which costs almost 14 cents to mint and produce. But even though both coins have a higher production cost than their worth, the ratio for nickels is 1.4 - 1, whereas the penny is 4 -1.

According to legal scholar Laurence H. Tribe, it is legal for Trump to order the U.S. treasure to stop minting pennies without congress’ approval. “Unlike a lot of what the new administration has been doing pursuant to the flood of executive orders since January 20, this action seems to me entirely lawful and

and fully constitutional,” Tribe said. In the quote, he was referring to the pressure Trump is currently putting on the limits of his power as president since taking office.

The move was quite sudden, as Trump has not discussed his desire to eliminate the penny during his campaign, but Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency raised the idea in a post on X last month.

In addition, this wouldn’t be the first time the U.S. has discontinued its least valuable coin. In 1857, the half-cent coin was eliminated by congress to also reduce cost. James Buchanan was the president at the time; he was elected in 1857.

All in all, the decision made by the president was abrupt and immediately debated among the government and the public. The effects of this dramatic shift in direction will be observed for years to come, with prices being rounded and the value of pennies getting gradually higher. Trump wrote in a post while departing the Super Bowl: “Let’s rip the waste out of our great nations budget, even if it’s a penny at a time,”

Wild Day at Daytona

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Dance Dude!

The latest updates

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The annual appearance of Dance Dude commenced last week, when the teacher, who calls himself “EJ the DJ,” came to school to teach the students new dance moves.

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Straw Policy Changed

The latest updates

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Opposing president Biden’s efforts to make federal sites more eco-friendly, Trump signed an executive order recently to make plastic straws mandatory at all government facilities.

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The History of Pike Place Market

How to Enjoy Traditions at Home and in Public

One of Seattle’s most iconic attractions is Pike Place Market. This cultural marvel is full of history and hardship.

The Market was founded ion 1907 as a response to rising food prices and the need for a place where local farmers could sell fresh produce directly to the public; this increased the farmers’ earnings because there were no transportation fees for them to pay. At the time, Seattle’s population was growing rapidly, increasing the demand for fresh food such as fruit and vegetables, and affordable, high-quality food. The market was designed to decrease the people’s need for food, which was driving the increasing cost of amenities.

Pike Place Market quickly became a popular spot, drawing large crowds who heard about the amazing poultry, fish meat, and other goods. The market’s initial

salespeople were primarily local farmers and fishermen. But the early years didn’t come without challenges. The market was soon overcrowded with people; it also faced problems with poor infrastructure, with few food stalls, bathrooms, and other common amenities, which was commonplace during the great depression.

During the 1940s-1960s, Pike Place Market began to face a time of decline. The attack on Pearl Harbor definitely effected the market, and as Seattle grew, urbanization and the development of shopping malls threatened the Market.

In the 1970s, a preservation group led by architect Victor Steinbruek, fought to save Pike Place Market from demolition. Their efforts proved successful, and in 1971, the Market was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Currently, you can visit Pike Place Market; food is available, with other modern shops and businesses to keep you busy.



Above: The Gum Wall is located down an ordinary alleyway in Pike Place Market. It started in the 1990s when local patrons and performers of Unexpected Productions, an improv comedy business, stuck their used gum to the alley wall behind the stage.



Above: William Byron celebrates after amazing victory of the Daytona 500. Did you know that the Daytona 500 is 2.5 miles long and requires 200 laps to complete a 500-mile race?

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Wild Day at Daytona 500

The New NASCAR regular season began on February 16, the 67th Daytona 500 event running at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Florida. It is commonly known as the “Great American Race” and is considered the most important event in the NASCAR world.

The winner of this year’s competition was William Byron, who also won in 2024. He’s so far participated in multiple Daytona 500 seasons. There are many regulations for the cars that compete in the Daytona 500

First, the car type matters, and stock cars (highly modified race cars) are built specifically for the sport. The engine class also matters; NASCAR uses naturally aspirated V8 engines. Naturally aspirated means the cars’ engines don’t have superchargers or turbochargers to increase their power output. There are also many other regulations on the cars, including aerodynamics, weight and size, tires, fuel, pit stops, and more. There are replays of the race on YouTube and many other streaming apps.

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Paper Straw Policy Changed

President Trump recently signed an executive order ceasing the forced use of paper straws for use in government facilities and national parks. This order directly reversed efforts by former President Joe Biden, to end the utilization of single-use plastic straws.

Biden passed the law to reduce the use of plastic by the government, but Trump said paper straws were “nonfunctional” and “don’t work.” The abrupt move by Trump targets the Biden administration’s policy to phase out federal purchase of single-use plastics, including straws and cups, from food service operation, events, and packaging by 2027, and from all federal operations by 2035 (AP News).

In fact, his reelection campaign sold Trump-branded reusable plastic straws for \$15 per pack of 10 straws. Saving the planet is a little more important than campaigning, in my opinion!



Above: Paper straws are much more eco-friendly, being made of paper and other natural materials; though they do have less usage time than plastic ones, being easily broken.

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FedEx Flight Catches Fire



Above Left, the plane’s engine burst into flames midair, then came around and made an emergency landing. Above Right: This image shows the plane after it’s landed and is waiting on the “Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting” (ARFF) unit.

Saturday morning, a FedEx cargo plane traveling from Newark, New Jersey, to Indianapolis struck a bird during takeoff, and consequentially caught fire. After colliding with the bird, it executed an emergency landing back at the airport around 8:07 pm, NBC News reported.

Flight 3609 was witnessed and filmed by New York resident Mike Bova while driving by the airport in Newark. “We actually thought it was a passenger plane,” he said. “we’re just like, ‘those poor people on board. Hopefully they land safely. Nothing happens to them.’”

In addition, aviation expert John Cox said that commercial two-engine aircraft like the Boeing 767 are certified to fly on one engine until it runs out of fuel.

“Now, it’s just like any other mechanical failure of an engine, you’re down to a single engine operation,” Cox told NBC News. “There are procedures for that, and pilots train for it, and it results in a safe landing,” Cox added.

The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) is currently investigating the incident.

Some people are pondering whether or not the increase in crashes and flight failures have something to do with the employment cuts issued by Trump, which could cause lower staffing and ultimately staffing shortages in many facilities, including airports. On January 28, more than a month ago, a buyout offer was made to federal employees, taunting them, with a certain amount of money, to quit their job. A judge stopped the buyout from going forward though, pausing it temporarily.

Then, on February 11, Trump signed an executive order to make cuts to the federal work force, and on February 12 the judge started up the buyout process again.

Even though crash rates have gone up, the fact stands that overall, traveling is still safest by airplane.

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Disney Ship Sets Sail Later this Year

Disney Cruise Line is now putting its final touches on its biggest ship yet, the Adventure, and the company just revealed new details about what awaits guests on its maiden voyage later this year. With a capacity of about 6,000 passengers, the beast will measure 1,122 feet long (CNN). Being based in Singapore, it will primarily offer short 3–4-night trips.

The Disney Adventure will embark on a 3-day maiden voyage from Singapore on December 15, featuring two days at sea. After its first days on water, it will offer 3-night, 4-night, and a limited number of 5-night voyages, all departing from Singapore (Disneycruiseblog.com).



Above: Mount Everest is one of the most challenging mountains to climb on Earth, resulting in fewer than 800 people attempting the climb annually.

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Ecuador Court Rules Oceans Have Rights



The Constitutional Court of Ecuador has ruled that marine ecosystems on the country’s coast have legal rights. This followed the 2008 “Rights of Nature” act; it is written in the country’s constitution, which, in articles 71-74, states the rights of nature.

Ecuador borders the Pacific Ocean in western South America. The water off its beaches is inhabited by sharks, whales, dolphins, sea turtles, and even manta rays! The Galapagos Islands, home to the famous Komodo dragon, are also part of Ecuador.

The most recent ruling was triggered by a lawsuit filed in 2020 by fishers hoping to end a limitation on industrial fishing within a 9-mile area of coastal waters (The Week Junior.) The court ruled against the fishers, saying that the area in question had helped increase fish and sea life population and is necessary for the health of the habitat. Hugo Echeverria, an Ecuadorian lawyer, told Inside Climate News, “The decision opens the door to a new perspective, a blue perspective, of the rights of nature.”

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Dance Dude Comes to Kirk



Dance dude, who calls himself “EJ the DJ,” came to Peter Kirk last week; he comes to the school every year as a part of his rotating schedule between schools in multiple districts. Tuesday and Thursday he was substituted by “dance dude 1.0,” the person who started the program almost 30 years ago.

During his time at each school, he teaches similar dances to popular songs, like the Electric Slide and the Cupid Shuffle. Fifth graders learned the dance to the song “Dynamite” by BTS, called “Dynamite” Dance. Younger grades learned dances like “Peanut Butter Jelly” and the “Macarena.” Most opinions were positive, saying that it was a great way for kids to move their body and stay in community; though some thought dance dude treated them like a younger grade.

Friday night, Dance Dude hosted a whole-school dance party with ice cream and other exciting festivities. All in all, most people think that Dance Dude is an amazing addition to their school day.

Jokes, Poem, and Crossword

Jokes:

What does a baby computer call its father?

Instead of Da-da, "Da-ta."

How do you make a pencil smarter?

You sharpen it.

I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger.

Then it hit me.

Two cows were standing in a field. "Have you heard that mad cow disease is going around?" asked the first. "Yeah," the other cow replied. "Makes me glad I'm a penguin."

My three favorite things are eating my family and not using commas.

Riddles:

What goes up and down but never moves?

A stairway.

A man went out for a walk, and it started to rain. He didn't have a hat, an umbrella, a hoodie, or anything else he could use to cover his head. But no hair on his head got wet. How is this possible?

He was bald.

When Lucy was 10, Sarah was half her age. Now that Lucy is 14, how old is Sarah?

Nine. (Half of 10 is five, so Sarah is five years younger than Anne, which she'll always be.)

Poem: The Meaning of Life

By: Wesley Faulds

I climb to the peak

Of life, then speak

To the godly existence of time

I then realize the mistake

I was bound to make,

I had forgot to simply enjoy the ride

I was deafened by

By the sound of my own voice, oh why

Did I have to miss

The meaning of life