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sneezes. The virus can also be spread by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects and can remain airborne for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area. The virus can spread before and after the presence of symptoms, putting unvaccinated individuals at high risk.

The more infectious a virus is, the higher the percent of the population that needs to be vaccinated to prevent an outbreak. For measles, a population vaccination rate of at least 95% is needed to protect the community from an outbreak. The state's measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination rate for kindergartners was 93.8% for the 2023-2024 school year, just below the 95% threshold, but vaccination rates are even lower in some counties and schools. For 2023-2024 school-specific coverage and exemption rates, please visit the North Carolina Kindergarten Immunization Data Dashboard at: [ncdhhs.gov/kindergarten](http://ncdhhs.gov/kindergarten).

#### Key Preparedness Measures for North Carolina:

- **Vaccination:** NCDHHS strongly urges all residents to ensure they are up to date on the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine. Children should receive the first dose of the vaccine at 12-15 months and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. Adults who have not been vaccinated or are unsure of their status should consult their health care provider. Please see the CDC's measles FAQ and vaccinations page for more information at: [cdc.gov/measles](http://cdc.gov/measles).
- **Public Awareness:** The state and local health departments are working closely with health care providers, schools and child care centers across the state to ensure that they are aware of the risks and prepared for potential cases of measles.
- **Guidance for Child Care Centers and Schools:** NCDHHS encourages schools, childcare centers and community organizations to review vaccination records and ensure that all children and staff members are up to date with their vaccinations. Early identification and action are essential if an outbreak were to occur. For detailed vaccination recommendations, please refer to the NCDHHS measles webpage: [ncdhhs.gov/measles](http://ncdhhs.gov/measles).
- **Preparedness and Monitoring:** The state's public health officials are closely monitoring trends in other states and globally. NCDHHS has issued guidance for health care providers to be on the lookout for measles symptoms and to immediately report suspected cases.

#### What Residents Can Do:

- Ensure children and adults are vaccinated or have evidence of immunity to measles. For more information, visit the CDC Measles Vaccine Considerations page at: [cdc.gov/measles](http://cdc.gov/measles).
- Be aware of measles symptoms, including fever; cough; runny nose; red, watery eyes; and a red rash that usually begins on the face and spreads to the rest of the body.
- If you suspect you or your child may have been exposed to measles, call your health care provider immediately. Do not visit the doctor's office or emergency room without notifying them in advance to prevent exposure to others.
- If you are planning to travel internationally or to an area with a known outbreak domestically, tell your health care provider about your travel plans.

For more information on measles prevention and vaccination resources, visit the NCDHHS website and see the page dedicated to measles and measles prevention: [ncdhhs.gov/measles](http://ncdhhs.gov/measles).

## Repair Homes Now Before Bat Popping Season

### Wildlife Commission says to check attics and chimneys for bats before May 1



The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) recommends that homeowners check now for bats that may be getting into their home and evict them responsibly before pup-rearing season begins on May 1.

Bats are highly beneficial, offering free pest control by devouring nearly their own body weight in insects each night. Their hunger for insects peaks during pup-rearing season, which runs May 1 to July 31 across North Carolina.

Early spring is the perfect time to check for bats and make sure if any are getting into the building, they end up elsewhere before this season's pups are born. Bat evictions work by allowing bats to leave

on their own, while preventing them from getting back in. "Newborn bats can't fly and are left in the roost while their mothers forage for the evening," says Katherine Etchison, the agency's bat biologist. This is the key to why evictions aren't legal during pupping season. All bats are protected in North Carolina, and evictions during this time can kill newborn bat pups.

"Evicting bats during this time ensures any pups in the roost will starve. To make matters worse, desperate mother bats may fly through open doors or windows trying to reach their pups, increasing the chance of a close encounter with humans" say Etchison. "By August 1, bat pups are old enough to fly, so it's safe to evict bats after that date."

Bat guano, which resembles mouse droppings, often piles up under the entry point bats use to get to their roost. Check under attic vents, shutters or other potential entry points for rice-sized droppings that easily crush into a fine powder.

If you suspect bats are getting inside, you can hire a licensed Wildlife Control Agent ([gooutdoorsnorthcarolina.com/locate-agent](http://gooutdoorsnorthcarolina.com/locate-agent)) or follow Bat Conservation International's guidance on evicting bats yourself ([batcon.org/about-bats/bats-in-homes-buildings](http://batcon.org/about-bats/bats-in-homes-buildings)).

Though evicting bats isn't an option between May 1 and July 31, homeowners can ensure bats can't enter the human living space. A licensed Wildlife Control Agent can inspect the home and seal off any gaps that would allow bats to enter the main dwelling area. They can also make any preparations for evicting the bats once pup-rearing season is over. If you do find a bat inside the living space, especially if you can't rule out that it may have come into direct contact with a person or a pet, contact your county health department immediately to find out if the bat needs to be tested.

Bats return to the same roost each spring, so it's important to make permanent repairs that prevent them from entering the building in future years. You can give bats an alternative roost by installing a bat box in a sunny area on your property. For the best chance of success, follow Bat Conservation International's tips on building, buying and installing bat boxes ([batcon.org](http://batcon.org)).

Contact NCWRC's Wildlife Helpline, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 866-318-2401 for questions, or email [HWI@ncwildlife.org](mailto:HWI@ncwildlife.org).

You can also visit Co-Existing with Bats on NCWRC's website, [ncwildlife.org/bat](http://ncwildlife.org/bat).

### Ticket Wins Record \$6.7 Million Digital Instant Jackpot

A lucky lottery player from New Bern just won the biggest digital instant jackpot in North Carolina lottery history with a \$6.7 million prize. The lucky winner bought a \$2 Monopoly ticket and instantly won the Grand Fortune jackpot. The odds of that win were 1 in 25 million.

The Tuesday, April 8 win marks the biggest digital instant win in North Carolina since the games debuted in November of 2023. After today's big win, the jackpot reset at \$150,000 and continues to climb again.

Monopoly represents the first multi-state digital instant game offered in both North Carolina and Virginia. That means jackpots will grow higher faster and winners could come from either state.

The lottery website is: [lotterync.net](http://lotterync.net).

## Friends of the Hampton B. Allen Library Yard Sale Fundraiser

The Friends of the Hampton B. Allen Library are having their 2nd annual Spring Clean Community Yard Sale fundraiser on Saturday, April 26. The event takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 120 South Greene Street in uptown Wadesboro.

Anyone interested in reserving a space for \$20 can call 704-694-5177 and ask for Dayna or Gerald.

### WEST/CAPLE - PLATE & FLEA MARKET SALE

All weekend from 10am - 7pm

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