

# WHO warns of measles surge in Vietnam

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A child gets vaccinated against measles at the Centre for Disease Control in Ninh Thuan Province. PHOTO: VNA/VIET NAM NEWS

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**HANOI** – The World Health Organisation (WHO) has assessed the risk of a measles outbreak in Việt Nam as very high and recommends large-scale vaccination campaigns in provinces and cities with high and very high risk, as well as in areas currently experiencing measles case clusters.

For provinces and cities with low and medium risk, WHO advises conducting reviews for catch-up vaccinations for children who missed doses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2024, Việt Nam reported more than 45,550 suspected measles cases, including 7,583 confirmed infections and 16 deaths linked to the disease.

Approximately one-fourth of confirmed cases occurred in infants under nine months of age, a group not yet eligible for routine measles vaccination under national guidelines.

Health authorities noted that most cases involved unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children or those too young to receive the vaccine.

WHO emphasised that in countries with active measles transmission, the first dose of the measles vaccine should be administered at nine months, followed by a second dose for children aged 15 to 18 months.

During outbreaks, the agency recommends an additional supplementary dose for infants aged six to nine months to curb transmission. These early doses, WHO stressed, are safe and effective in protecting vulnerable infants during epidemics.

Since September 2024, Việt Nam's Ministry of Health has rolled out measles vaccination campaigns for children aged 1–10 years across 31 provinces.

Seven provinces have completed the campaign's first phase, while 24 others continue efforts to administer initial and follow-up doses.

Looking ahead, the Ministry of Health has drafted a 2025 measles prevention plan targeting high-risk areas. Children aged six months to under nine months in 24 provinces with active outbreaks will be prioritised, alongside those aged 1 to 10 years in designated regions.

Healthcare workers treating measles patients who are not fully vaccinated will also be included.

The 2025 campaign will unfold in two phases. Phase 1 will cover provinces listed under Decisions No. 2495/QĐ-BYT and 3526/QĐ-BYT, while Phase 2 will expand to 17 more provinces, including Thái Bình, Hà Nam and Bắc Giang.

Local authorities will determine specific age groups for vaccination based on outbreak severity and vaccine availability, according to the Ministry of Health.

- [asianews.network](https://asianews.network), February 7, Hanoi, Vietnam