# Robert F. Kennedy Jr. questions measles coverage amid rising outbreaks and autism concerns



Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has recently ignited controversy with his comments regarding measles vaccines and autism during an appearance on Chris Cuomo's show on NewsNation. The Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary faced scrutiny for suggesting that media attention has unfairly focused on measles outbreaks while downplaying what he termed an "epidemic" of autism.

Kennedy's statements came amid a significant spike in measles cases in the United States; as of now, approximately 884 reported infections across 30 states are primarily among unvaccinated individuals. This resurgence in measles has resulted in three fatalities in 2023, marking the first such deaths in over a decade. In Canada, the situation is similarly alarming, with reported cases reaching 1,069.

During the broadcast, Kennedy animatedly asserted, “We’ve had four measles deaths in this country in 20 years… We have 100,000 autism cases a year… That should be in the headlines.” He emphasised that historically 2 million cases of measles were recorded annually, with death rates significantly higher than today's figures. He contrasted the amount of media coverage received by measles with the relative silence surrounding chronic diseases affecting children today, drawing applause from the studio audience for his focus on escalating rates of diabetes.

Kennedy has long been a sceptic of vaccines and previously promoted the discredited theory linking the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine to rising autism rates. However, medical professionals have countered that the increase in autism diagnoses is largely attributable to improved diagnostic criteria and increased awareness rather than a direct correlation with vaccinations. Dr. Peter Hotez, a leading infectious disease expert at Baylor College of Medicine, expressed concern that, if the current trend continues, measles outbreaks may become a new normal.

The ongoing outbreaks have drawn particular attention in Texas, where 663 people, primarily young children, are infected, representing the largest measles outbreak in the U.S. since the year 2000. Tragically, the fatalities include two young girls, ages 6 and 8, alongside an unvaccinated adult in New Mexico.

Kennedy's comments about historical measles cases highlighted the drastic impact that widespread vaccination has had since the MMR vaccine's introduction in the 1970s. Prior to vaccination, annual deaths from measles were approximately 400 to 500, a sharp decline to nearly zero following the vaccine's rollout. The World Health Organization declared measles eliminated in the United States in the year 2000, a status that has since been challenged by renewed outbreaks often linked to low vaccination rates in specific communities.

Health experts emphasise that vaccination is crucial to preventing severe complications from measles, which can include serious consequences like brain swelling and death. Moreover, there have been no documented deaths from the MMR vaccine in healthy individuals. In light of historical data, CDC reports underscore that autism is now diagnosed in approximately 1 in 36 children in the United States, a significant increase compared to earlier decades when the rate was substantially lower.

Kennedy continued to call for a shift in public focus towards autism, arguing that the societal implications of autism require greater attention, including financial burdens projected for future generations. He stated, “By 2035, we're going to be spending a million dollars a year on autism,” reflecting the substantial societal costs associated with higher diagnosis rates.

Overall, the recent commentary from Kennedy has reignited discussions surrounding vaccine hesitancy, public health policy, and the heavy burden of chronic diseases affecting children today, illustrating a complex interplay of public health narratives and individual perspectives in the evolving landscape of vaccine discourse.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-health-secretary-kennedy-revives-misleading-claims-fetal-debris-measles-shots-2025-05-01/> - This article reports on Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s recent comments about measles vaccines, including claims about 'fetal debris' in the MMR vaccine, which have been debunked by vaccine experts.
* <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/02/kennedy-cdc-alternative-measles-treatments> - This piece discusses Kennedy's directive to the CDC to develop alternative measles treatments, following his controversial remarks about the disease and vaccines.
* <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/01/rfk-vaccine-plan-threat-future-shots> - This article examines Kennedy's proposed policy changes requiring placebo-controlled trials for all new vaccines, a move that could impact vaccine development and availability.
* <https://www.axios.com/2025/04/28/rfk-autism-data-nih-alarm> - This report highlights concerns from researchers and advocacy groups about Kennedy's autism data initiative, which some fear may be biased toward supporting the discredited vaccine-autism link.
* <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html> - The CDC's official page provides comprehensive data on measles cases and outbreaks in the U.S., including statistics on vaccination coverage and disease incidence.
* <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/> - This CDC resource offers detailed information on measles cases and outbreaks, including data on vaccination status and age distribution of reported cases.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14669303/RFK-Jr-drops-bombshell-measles-vaccine-autism-primetime-interview.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data