



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TO PRIMARY & SECONDARY CARE

Friday, 19 July 2019

Confirmed Measles in Hawke's Bay

This advisory is to alert you to the occurrence of a confirmed case of measles in Hawke's Bay and to provide advice on how you can assist us in preventing spread of the virus in our community. The confirmed case is an infant who had been in contact with a confirmed case in Auckland. Another member of the same family may also have the illness.

Potentially exposed people in Hawke's Bay

We are actively following up people who may have been exposed to the virus when the case attended a GP practice. We are also contacting people potentially exposed in our Emergency Department on July 12th between 8pm and 2.30am and between 4.30 and 6.40pm on July 16th. Please consider whether people you see with potential symptoms may have been among this group.

Prior to the family realising the nature of the illness the child also accompanied a member of the family to New World in Flaxmere on July 10 between 5 and 5.30. While we consider the risk to staff and other customers to be lower in this setting it may be useful to enquire as to whether patients presenting with possible symptoms were at New World at the time or up to two hours later.

We will be alerting the public to the potential for exposure at the supermarket so you may be contacted by concerned people seeking information on immunisation status or with symptoms.

Checking immunisation status and encouraging immunisation

The most important thing you can do is to help check immunisation status of patients and encourage vaccination for anyone who is not fully immunised. The group who are most at risk are the under 15 month old infants and unimmunised pregnant women (who should not be vaccinated whilst pregnant). We are **not** recommending a change to the schedule at this time. However if a parent requests MMR earlier this can be given from 12 months of age. All 15 month immunisations should be given at the same time.

Although infants and non-immune pregnant women are the most susceptible, data from outbreaks in other parts of New Zealand show that the highest rates of illness have been among unimmune age 10-29 years olds. We are recommending that anyone over 5 years of age AND born after 1969 ensures that they have had two documented doses of measles containing vaccine.

Prepare your practice

1. Ensure all staff in your practice are immune to measles. You are immune if you have been vaccinated with two MMR immunisations (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), were born before 1969 or if you have had confirmed measles.

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2. Refamiliarise yourself with the clinical features: Measles chapter in the Immunisation Handbook
<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/immshandbook-11-measles-mar18-v2.pdf>
 3. To obtain supplies of nasopharyngeal swab kits please contact the laboratory. As these are used the laboratory will supply further stock on request. Phone 06 872 6450 or Fax 06 878 6538.

Investigation and management:

For patients presenting with either measles prodrome (fever, cough, coryza, conjunctivitis +/- Koplik's spots) or morbilliform rash (maculopapular rash beginning on the face and spreading as a blotchy rash to the trunk and extremities):

- Isolate the case from all other patients in your waiting room (ideally encourage ringing ahead).
- Collect the appropriate nasopharyngeal sample using the swab in viral transport medium from Southern Community Laboratories. The package contains a red screw-capped tube with viral transport medium. Do not use the blue nasopharyngeal pertussis swab with charcoal transport medium.
- Obtain serology for measles antibodies if indicated. Note that in the first few days of the illness serology may be of low diagnostic value.
- Include clinical information on the lab form i.e. measles immunisation history; past measles history; measles contact; date of onset of prodrome; date of rash onset.
- Please collect laboratory samples within your practice. If venepuncture at the laboratory is necessary please arrange in advance with the laboratory to avoid risking further community transmission.
- Notify the **Public Health Unit on 834 1815** without awaiting results. If you think testing is not warranted please discuss with the Medical Officer of Health.
- Ensure the room that the patient was using is left vacant for 2 hours (due to the virus being airborne) and clean all hard surfaces following your local infection control cleaning policy.

Thanks for your assistance. We are hopeful that with our high immunisation coverage and active case follow-up we can prevent an outbreak in Hawke's Bay.

Rachel Eyre and Nicholas Jones
Medical Officers of Health
Hawke's Bay District Health Board