

12 November, 2013

Measles warning issued for schoolies travelling to Bali

NSW Health is reminding young people travelling to Bali, Indonesia in the coming weeks as part of schoolies celebrations to check they are fully immunised for measles before their departure.

Dr Vicky Sheppeard, Director of Communicable Diseases at NSW Health, said measles is highly contagious among people who are not fully immunised.

“Measles is spread through coughing and sneezing. Symptoms can include fever, tiredness, a runny nose, cough and sore red eyes which usually last for several days before a red, blotchy rash appears,” Dr Sheppeard said.

“Complications can range from an ear infection and diarrhoea to pneumonia or swelling of the brain.

“Across Australia in recent weeks there have been 27 cases of measles associated with travel to Indonesia, particularly to Bali. So far this year there have been 29 measles cases in NSW, of which 20 were acquired overseas or interstate or were closely linked to such cases.

“More than a quarter of those measles notifications have been linked to travel to Bali.

“We encourage anyone who has not previously been vaccinated to do so.

“Children should receive two doses of vaccine, one at 12 months and the second at 18 months.

“Children over 18 months who have not had their second dose of measles vaccine can be vaccinated now. Anyone born during or after 1966 should have two doses of vaccine (at least 4 weeks apart).

“NSW Health urges everyone planning on travelling to Bali for schoolies, to ensure they’re up to date with their vaccinations.

“This is also an opportunity to urge other young people taking part in schoolies celebrations around the country, in places such as Byron Bay and the Gold Coast, to check they are up to date with measles vaccinations.

“All young travellers should check with their GP and have a free measles vaccine if they don’t have written evidence of having received two doses during their lifetime.”

For more information on measles, please go to www.health.nsw.gov.au.