

Measles Alert

Information for NSW General Practitioners

Please distribute to all medical and nursing staff

1. There have been 10 cases of measles in NSW since 01 January 2024 including two locally acquired cases.
2. Consider measles in people arriving from overseas with fever even if previously vaccinated for measles and in anyone with fever, cough, conjunctivitis, and maculopapular rash.
3. Isolate cases of suspected measles and call Public Health on 1300 066 055 to notify and seek advice on testing.

Measles situation

- Of the ten cases this year, eight were acquired overseas. Two cases acquired measles in NSW after being identified as contacts of known cases.
- Measles remains common in many parts of the world, with large outbreaks currently occurring in several countries, including India, Pakistan, and Indonesia.
- Measles transmission is increasing globally, including in countries that previously eliminated measles such as the United Kingdom and the United States.
- There is continued risk of measles in NSW due to ongoing global measles outbreaks and international travel. There should be a high index of suspicion for measles in anyone with clinically compatible symptoms who recently arrived in NSW from overseas, even if they report measles vaccination.

How does measles present?

- A 2-4 day prodromal illness with fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.
- A maculopapular rash typically begins on the face and neck and then spreads down the body.
- Measles in previously vaccinated people may present atypically, with milder symptoms and a slower progression to the rash.
- Cases are usually infectious from the day before the prodrome to four days after the rash onset.

How to manage suspected cases

- **Isolate:** measles is a highly contagious illness
- **Notify:** inform your Public Health Unit (PHU) immediately (don't wait for test results before calling).
- **Test:** collect a nose and throat swab, and a first pass urine sample for nucleic acid testing (PCR) and blood for measles serology (IgM and IgG). Mark the tests requested as **URGENT**. Your PHU can assist in expediting testing.

Opportunistic measles vaccination

- Consultations prior to overseas travel are opportunities to encourage measles vaccination for any patients with uncertain measles vaccination histories.
- Children aged from 6 months to under 12 months can have an MMR vaccination early if travelling overseas. Children who do receive an earlier dose should receive their usual MMR vaccine at 12 months of age or 4 weeks after the 1st early dose, whichever is later. They should receive their final dose of MMRV at 18 months of age as routinely recommended.
- Measles containing vaccines (MMR) are free in NSW for those born during or after 1966 who have not previously had two documented doses.

For further information, please see www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles



Dr Christine Selvey

Director, Communicable Disease Branch

11 April 2024

NSW Ministry of Health

ABN 92 697 899 630
1 Reserve Rd St Leonards NSW
2065 Locked Mail Bag 2030 St Leonards
NSW 1590 Tel. (02) 9391 9000 Fax. (02)
9391 9101

Website. www.health.nsw.gov.au