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FOURTH CASE OF MEASLES DETECTED IN SYDNEY THIS MONTH

NSW Health is again urging people to watch for symptoms of measles after another young adult contracted the highly contagious disease in Sydney following three cases reported earlier this month.

The four cases reported in Sydney since early December have spent considerable time in the Sydney metropolitan area while infectious.

The most recent case, who was a known contact of one of the earlier cases, had visited a number of locations between 23-24 December while infectious, including restaurants and shops in Leichardt, Pyrmont and Neutral Bay, and public transport on routes in the inner west.

NSW Health's Acting Director Communicable Diseases, Dr Sean Tobin, said the new case highlighted the importance of getting vaccinated to protect against the disease.

"A highly effective measles vaccine has been freely available for many years and it is vital for everyone, including adults and children, to have two doses of the measles vaccine during their lifetime," Dr Tobin said.

"Those people who have not received two doses of measles vaccine should be alert to the symptoms of measles in the coming days and weeks as the measles cases have moved in many parts of Sydney.

"If you develop the symptoms of measles, seek medical advice, but make sure that you call ahead to your doctor or hospital emergency department so that you can be isolated from others to minimise the risk of infection.

"The measles virus is highly contagious and is spread through the air through coughing or sneezing by someone who is unwell with the disease.

"Symptoms of measles include fever, sore eyes and a cough followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash spreading from the head and neck to the rest of the body. Measles can have serious complications, particularly for young children.

"Children or adults born during or since 1966 who do not have documented evidence of receiving two doses of measles vaccine, or evidence of previous measles infection, are likely to be susceptible to measles and should be vaccinated as soon as possible," Dr Tobin said.

Anyone born during or since 1966 should have two doses of vaccine (at least four weeks apart). For young children, the measles vaccine is recommended at 12 months and again at 18 months of age.

NSW Health offers free MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine through GPs for people born during or since 1966 with no records of having received two doses of MMR vaccine.

“It’s important that people planning to travel overseas are fully vaccinated against measles before departure to reduce their risk of contracting measles and then bringing the disease back to Australia and putting others at risk,” Dr Tobin said.

For more information visit:

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles_Factsheet.aspx

**Media contact: NSW Health Public Affairs T: a/hrs. pager (02) 9962 9890;
email: media@doh.health.nsw.gov.au**