

MEASLES ALERT

Recommendations and information for NSW Community Pharmacists

Please distribute this information to all staff



Health

H20/1596-2

1. **Measles cases continue to be reported including locally acquired cases.**
2. **Two doses of a measles-containing vaccine is recommended for people born during or after 1966, particularly those planning overseas travel.**
3. **Encourage anyone planning overseas travel to check their measles vaccination status.**
4. **Authorised pharmacists should offer MMR vaccine to travellers born after 1966 who have not had two doses of a measles-containing vaccine.**

Measles

- Measles is highly contagious and is spread in the air through coughing or sneezing.
- 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 body.
- Measles continues to circulate in many parts of the world, including places which are popular destinations for Australian travellers, such as Pacific islands, Philippines, NZ, India, Bali, and Thailand.
- People with measles symptoms should self-isolate and seek medical review without exposing other people.

Measles in NSW

- There have been 6 measles cases notified since New Year's Eve and all are likely to have acquired their infections in Sydney. None were known contacts of recent cases.
- Some cases have spent time in highly populated locations while infectious, including hospitals, GP practices, community pharmacies, shopping centres, and on public transport.
- Maintaining high rates of measles immunisation in the community reduces the risk of measles being imported into Australia by returning travellers and, through herd immunity, reduces the spread of the virus locally if it is introduced.

Measles Vaccination

- Measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR) is safe and available free from GPs in NSW for those born during or after 1966 who have not previously had two documented doses.
- Pharmacists authorised to administer measles containing vaccine may vaccinate individuals born after 1966 aged 16 years and over, who have not previously received two doses.
- If people are unsure if they have received two doses, it's safe to have another dose unless contraindicated.
- Measles vaccine is contraindicated in those with a history of anaphylaxis to the vaccine or any of its components, pregnant women, and people with significant immunosuppression due to a medical condition or immunosuppressive therapy.
- Ensure all vaccines administered are recorded in the Australian Immunisation Register.
- Promotional resources including measles travel posters are available from:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/resources.aspx

Further Information:

- Australian Immunisation Handbook: <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>
- NSW Health Measles website: www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles
- Contact your local public health unit on **1300 066 055**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Selvey'.

Dr Christine Selvey
A/ Director, Communicable Disease Branch

9 January 2020