



Issue date
12 April 2024

Distributed to:

Chief Executives
Directors of Clinical Governance
Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit

Action required by:

Chief Executives
Directors of Clinical Governance

We recommend you also inform:

Directors, Managers and Staff of:

- Emergency Departments
- Infectious Diseases
- Paediatrics and Neonatology
- PHU
- Nursing

Deadline for completion of action
(14 April 2024)

Expert Reference Group

Content reviewed by:
Health Protection NSW

Clinical Excellence Commission

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[Intranet Website:](#)

Review date
April 2025

Clinician Alert - Measles

Situation

There have been 10 cases of measles reported in NSW since 01 January 2024. Eight of these cases acquired measles overseas during their recent travel to endemic countries such as India and Pakistan. Two cases acquired measles locally in NSW and were contacts of known cases.

Background

Measles is a highly contagious infectious disease and is notifiable based on clinical suspicion alone.

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 have 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 has been overseas in the previous three weeks, even if they report measles vaccination.

Measles containing vaccines (MMR) are free in NSW for those born during or after 1966 who have not previously had two documented doses.

Assessment

Measles typically presents with a 2–4-day prodromal illness with fever and the “three Cs”, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.

A maculopapular rash then 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.

It can take up to three weeks for symptoms to appear following exposure to a person with measles.

Clinical Recommendations

- **Collect** travel history (particularly international travel) for all patients presenting with a febrile illness.
- **Isolate and consider** measles in
 - people arriving from overseas with fever even if previously vaccinated for measles
 - anyone with fever, cough, coryza, conjunctivitis, with or without a maculopapular rash.
- **Notify** your public health unit (PHU) immediately on 1300 066 055 of any suspected measles cases (don't wait for test results before calling). PHUs will work with infection control to identify and follow up contacts of confirmed measles cases.



Safety Alert 006/24

- **Test:** collect a nose and throat swab, and a first pass urine sample for nucleic acid testing (PCR). Blood for measles serology (IgM and IgG) can be performed. Mark the tests requested as URGENT. Your PHU can assist in expediting testing.

Vaccination for travellers or unimmunised persons

Encourage measles **vaccination**; children aged from 6 months to under 12 months can have an MMR vaccination early if travelling overseas. They should still have two further doses at the usual time points. Further information is available in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Measles vaccine is free for those born during or after 1966 and who do not have two documented doses.

For more information

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles

Required actions for the Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Distribute this Safety Alert to all relevant clinicians and clinical departments for awareness and include a copy in relevant handovers and safety huddles.
2. Undertake a local risk assessment and develop strategies to mitigate the risk of missed or delayed diagnosis of measles.
3. Report all suspected and confirmed cases of measles to your Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055.
4. Confirm receipt and distribution of this Safety Alert within 72 hours to cec-recalls@health.nsw.gov.au