

MEASLES OUTBREAK INFORMATION

Monday, 14 February 2011

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

We are updating our immunisation register as Auckland Regional Public Health Service has advised us that there is currently a measles outbreak in Auckland.

Since the 11th of January, 13 people have been confirmed with measles infection in Auckland and the disease is now likely to be spreading in the wider community. The number of cases may seem small, but one person with measles can infect many others. So far the Auckland Regional Public Health Service has contacted nearly 500 people as part of this outbreak investigation. ARPHS advises that immunisation is the best protection against measles and **immunisation is safe, effective and free.**

Measles is a serious and highly infectious viral disease often causing fever, cough, sore red eyes and a rash. It can make people very sick. People with measles can be infectious even before they start feeling unwell. While almost all people will make a complete recovery, it can lead to hospitalisation and in rare cases, death.

We need you to **advise us of your child's immunisation status.**

Regarding your child's immunisation status:

- **If your child has not received a measles immunisation (MMR vaccine)**, call your GP as soon as possible. Arrange a time to immunise your child as it is never too late.
- **If your child has received one measles immunisation (i.e. one MMR vaccination)**, call your GP as soon as possible to see if you need to arrange a time to immunise your child with their 2nd MMR. Two measles immunisations provide better protection than one.
- **If your child has received two measles immunisations, or they have definitely had doctor-diagnosed measles infection in the past**, they are considered protected. Over 95% of people who are fully immunised are protected from measles.
- **If you are not sure of your child's immunisation records**, check your Tamariki Ora Health Book or call your GP. Your GP can do a blood test to check your child's immunity to measles if needed.
- **If your child is not immune or you choose not to immunise your child**, they are not protected from measles. If they come into contact with someone with measles, they will likely have to be excluded from school or ECEC for up to 14 days.

The Health (Infectious and Notifiable Diseases) Regulation 1966 Part 3 r 14 (2) provides a legal mandate for the Medical Officer of Health to enforce isolation of any measles cases or contacts where this is indicated. Isolation is then the only way to prevent further transmission of the virus and to protect others in the community (like very young babies and ill people) from getting infected.

Watch your children for symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose, sore red eyes, or a rash. If this occurs:

- Call your GP or Healthline (0800 611 116) as soon as possible for advice.
- Keep your child away from school or pre-school until they are well again. Your GP will advise the safest time for your child to return.

For more information on immunisation, please call the Immunisation Advisory Centre free on 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) or visit their website <http://www.immune.org.nz>