

Centre for Disease Control

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Our Ref:

09/07/2010

Dear Doctor,

MEASLES ALERT FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) wishes to advise general practitioners to be alert for cases of measles.

A case of measles has been detected in a traveller who recently returned from South Africa. He became unwell on the 2nd of July and attended the Palmerston CMAX cinema on the same evening. He also attended two GP surgeries on the 5th and 6th of July. Contact tracing of other attendees to the GP surgeries is currently being conducted.

Measles is highly contagious and can be spread by brief casual contact so it is important to recognise the early symptoms and signs of measles to prevent further spread in the community.

Any local cases which might arise as a result of contact with this case would be expected to develop fever between July 8th and 26th with the onset of the rash estimated to be between July 12th and 30th.

Measles is characterised by a prodrome of 2-4 days of fever, coryza, cough and conjunctivitis followed by a rash, which usually starts on the face and appears while the case is still febrile.

Those at greatest risk of measles are:

- children less than 12 months of age;
- children over 12 months of age who have not been fully vaccinated against measles (fully vaccinated means having had one dose at 12 months and one at 4 years);
- adults born after 1960 who have never had measles or have not had 2 doses of vaccine against measles given at least 4 weeks apart.

We are asking general practitioners to please:

- maintain a high index of suspicion for measles in those presenting with fever and rash.
- make every effort to ensure that patients presenting with fever and rash do not sit in the general waiting area and are seen in a separate room.
- notify the Centre for Disease Control immediately of any suspected cases.

Testing for measles is best done by a combination of serology (IgM), dry swab from throat and/or nose for PCR and a urine sample for PCR/culture.

Finally, please ensure that all your staff are immune, ie they have either had measles or have had 2 doses of measles-containing vaccine at least 4 weeks apart.

A fact sheet on measles is available at:

http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Centre_for_Disease_Control/Publications/CDC_Factsheets/index.aspx

Yours sincerely,



Dr Vicki Krause,
Director,
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CDC contact numbers

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After hours contact the Royal Darwin Hospital switchboard on 8922 8888 and ask for the on call CDC medical officer.

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