



**Facsimile Cover Sheet /Wharangi Nama Waea**

Date/Te Ra: **9 January 2012**

<b>To/Kia:</b> GP's, Practice nurses at Primary Care Centres, After-hours Centres, Wellington Free Ambulance staff, Pharmacists, the Emergency Department and Hospital Staff in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions.	<b>From/Na:</b> <b>Dr Annette Nesdale</b> Medical Officer of Health Regional Public Health
Name of Agency/Wahi Mahi:	Fax Number/Nama Waea:

## Update on Measles – 2 confirmed measles cases, illness acquired in Auckland

I would be grateful if you could **distribute** the following Public Health Alert regarding measles to relevant staff in your organisation.

There may be changes in our advice in response to the changing situation and case numbers, please check that you are referring to the most up to date Public Health Advice. A copy of the most recent Public Health Alert can be found on our website: <http://www.rph.org.nz>.

If you would also like to receive this by email for ease of distribution, storage and retrieval please advise RPH of your email on [rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz](mailto:rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz).

Kind regards

Dr Annette Nesdale  
**Medical Officer of Health**

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He ture no nga korero katoa kei roto o tenei karere, no reira, kia tupato. Mehemea kaore matau kua e mau. Me whakamohiotia atu ki to Tari, me te mea nana i tono mai. E Tika Hoki.



**Date:** 9 January 2012

**To:** Practice nurses at Primary Care Centres, After-hours Centres, Wellington Free Ambulance staff, Pharmacists, the Emergency Department and Hospital Staff in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions.

**From:** Dr Annette Nesdale, Medical Officer of Health, Regional Public Health

## Public Health Alert

### 2 confirmed measles cases since 26 December. Illness acquired in Auckland

Since Christmas there have been two confirmed cases of measles in the greater Wellington region. The ill people were aged 18 months and 15 years, one was unimmunised and the other had had 1 MMR, both had been in Auckland during the exposure period. Measles is not currently circulating in the Wellington region, so a **history of travel to Auckland** in a person with a rash and concurrent fever greatly increases the likelihood of the illness being measles.

Contact tracing from the most recent person with measles includes people who were in the waiting room at Kenepuru A and M in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2012 (appendix 1 has a copy of the follow up letter). Susceptible people in the waiting room could start to show signs of pro-dromal illness from Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Notification**

A reminder that **all suspected cases who fit the case definition and you are testing for acute measles** must be notified to Regional Public Health. During working hours telephone the notifications line on 570 9267 and after hours notify the on-call medical officer of health via 04 570 9002.

Please refer to the public health alert of 28 October regarding recommended testing for measles and immunisation: <http://www.rph.org.nz> (Information for health practitioners)

## **Appendix 1. Letter sent to waiting room contacts**

### **Contact with Measles on January 1 or 2 2012 at Kenepuru Accident & Medical Centre**

This letter is to advise you that a person who did not know they had measles attended the Kenepuru Accident & Medical Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> January; at times which our records suggest you were also there.

Measles is easily passed on to people who have not had measles before or have not been fully vaccinated. People who get measles develop fever, sore red eyes, and a cough usually 7 to 14 days after contact, followed by a rash 3-5 days later. Some people can become so unwell they need admission to hospital, and measles can be followed by other infections such as ear infections, chest infections or sometimes pneumonia.

Measles usually takes 7-14 days to develop from contact, so if you are going to develop measles you would start feeling unwell with fever, runny nose, sore eyes and cough after Sunday 8th January and the skin rash would develop around 3-5 days later.

#### **Who are extremely unlikely to get measles? (likely to be immune to measles)**

- Those born before 1969, because they will have been exposed when measles was common
- Those who have had two doses of MMR or measles vaccine (fully vaccinated)
- People with a past diagnosis of measles illness confirmed by a blood test or swab.

#### **Who are more at risk for measles illness?**

- Those never vaccinated (not immune to measles)
- Those who have only had one dose of vaccine (possibly not immune to measles)
- Perhaps those who have reduced immunity from cancer treatment etc, but if born before 1969 then they will still probably be immune. If you are in this group please call your doctor for specific advice.

#### **If you are unsure about past vaccinations please check with your family doctor**

If there is anyone in your household or family who have not had two doses of MMR vaccine now is the time for them to see their GP to arrange vaccination. Those people who have never been vaccinated and were at Kenepuru A & M should isolate themselves from other people (please see isolation section on the following page).

#### **What should I do if I think I am getting measles?**

Please ring Healthline on 0800 611 116 to get advice from registered nurses. Most of the time measles does not need special medical care. We also want to make sure that measles is not spread in hospitals and medical centres. This means staying at home, and

wearing a mask if you need to have contact with other people. Healthlink staff will help coordinate your care at your medical centre or local hospital if required.

### Isolation (quarantine)


- If you are not immune (never been vaccinated) you need to stay in **isolation** (sometimes called quarantine) between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> day after the possible measles exposure:
  - from Sunday 8 January to Sunday 15 January if seen in A&M on 1 January 2012
  - from Monday 9 January to Monday 16 January if seen in A&M on 2 January 2012
- **Isolation is for people who are not immune and have been in contact with someone with measles.** It is an important part of stopping measles spreading in the community, especially to high risk people. **This is particularly important if you are a health care worker or work with young children.** People are infectious with measles before they become sick.
- Isolation (quarantine) means staying at home and away from daycare/school/work, church, group and social activities, sports and recreation events and public places like cinemas and shopping malls.
- You should only see people who are immune to measles when you are in isolation.

### Further information

The Ministry of Health has an excellent website, with a lot of very detailed information. <http://www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/diseases-and-illnesses/measles>

If you have any queries please contact your family doctor or practice nurse, or phone Regional Public Health Communicable Disease Team 570 9002 between 8.30 am - 5.00 pm weekdays.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jill McKenzie  
Medical Officer of Health  
Regional Public Health