



Facsimile Cover Sheet
Wharangi Nama Waea

Date/Te Ra: **18 June 2014**

To/Kia: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-hours Centers and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region	From/Na: Regional Public Health
Name of Agency/Wahi Mahi:	Fax Number/Nama Waea:

Public Health Alert- Measles

I would be grateful if you could distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation. 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.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Nesdale'.

Dr Annette Nesdale

Medical Officer of Health

Regional Public Health



Public Health Alert – 18 June 2014

To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-hours Centres Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region

From: Dr Annette Nesdale

Measles –significant increase in Waikato

There has been a worrying increase in the number of measles cases in students in the upper North Island, with a large outbreak of 53 confirmed cases of measles at Fraser High School and cases at other schools in Hamilton. This brings the total of people with measles in New Zealand this year to 182 with 33 of these people hospitalised. Measles is likely to continue to spread in the North Island for many months.

Greater Wellington region

There are no cases of measles in the Wellington region at the moment but with the **July school holidays** coming lots of people may travel to Auckland and Waikato or have children from these areas staying with them. Other activities where people may come in contact with someone in the early stage of measles include inter-school sports tournaments, on the ski fields, or travelling to Vietnam or the Philippines where there are on-going measles outbreaks.

A Public Health Alert has been sent to all schools and early childhood centres (see attached) recommending parents/caregivers check their children have had 2 doses of measles vaccine.

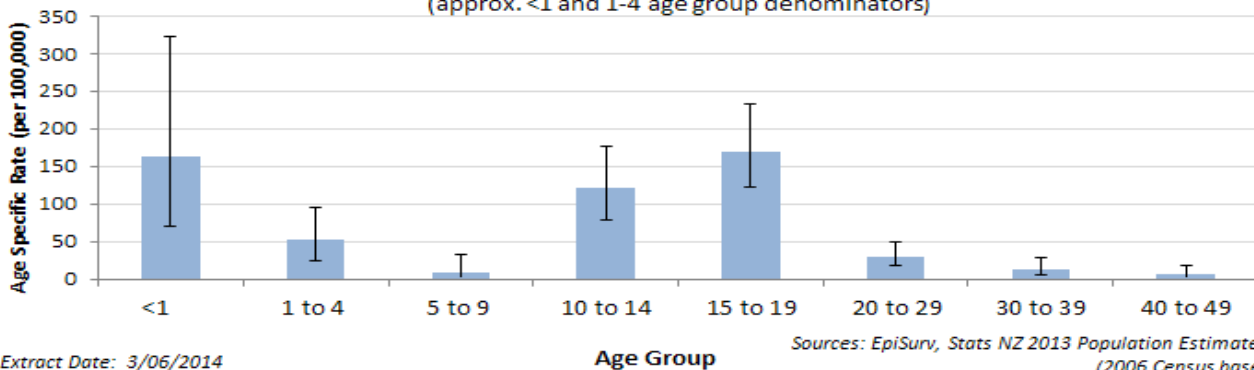
Age groups most at risk of measles

Data from the Auckland outbreak (see graph below) earlier this year identified the following age groups at highest risk of measles:

- babies under 15 months who have not had their first MMR and rely on high levels of immunisation in the community for their protection
- children and teens aged 10-19 years

2014 Surveillance Year Measles Age Specific Rates

Confirmed and Probable Cases with 95% Confidence Intervals
(approx. <1 and 1-4 age group denominators)



Immunisation advice by age group

Age group	Advice	Comment
Babies aged 6 months to 15 months	No specific action at this time	If traveling to area with a known outbreak consider MMR dose 0. Advise parents if child aged <12 month they will still require 2 further doses of MMR at 15 months and 4 years
Babies aged 15 months and over	Ensure MMR1 given on time. Use pre-call and recall.	If traveling to area with a known outbreak can have MMR2, four weeks after MMR 1
Children aged 4 years	Ensure MMR2 given on time.	Use pre-call and recall.
Children > 4 years, teens, adults who have had only 1 dose of measles vaccine	Offer MMR vaccine	People aged 18 – 23 years (born 1991 to 1996) may not have had a second measles vaccine. This was when the second MMR vaccine was changed from 11 yrs to 4 yrs. Children aged 5 to 10 years at this time were offered catch up MMR vaccine through schools but uptake and coverage was not high.
Children > 4 years, teens or adults who have not had measles vaccine or immunization history unknown	Offer 2 doses of MMR four weeks apart	

Advice for primary care/ After Hours Services/ Emergency Departments:

- Please be alert to the signs and symptoms of measles and have a low index of suspicion, particularly in patients who have been in the Waikato, travelled overseas or been in contacts with a measles case.
- Provide advice to the unwell person and their family about possible complications and when to seek further medical attention if the illness worsens.
- Confirmed and suspected cases should be advised to stay in isolation until 4 days after the onset of the rash.
- Measles is highly infectious and can spread in a waiting room. A person with suspected measles should be promptly triaged into an area where they can be isolated from other staff and patients. Consider the use of masks for potentially infectious cases.
- Check the immunisation status of clinical and frontline staff. People born before 1969 are considered protected as when they were growing up measles infection was common. People born before 1969 will be protected if they have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine after 12 months of age or had have measles illness.
- **Please notify** Regional Public Health of any cases **of suspected measles**. The notifications line is (04) 570 9267 during office hours, or after hours via Health Link (04) 570 9007.

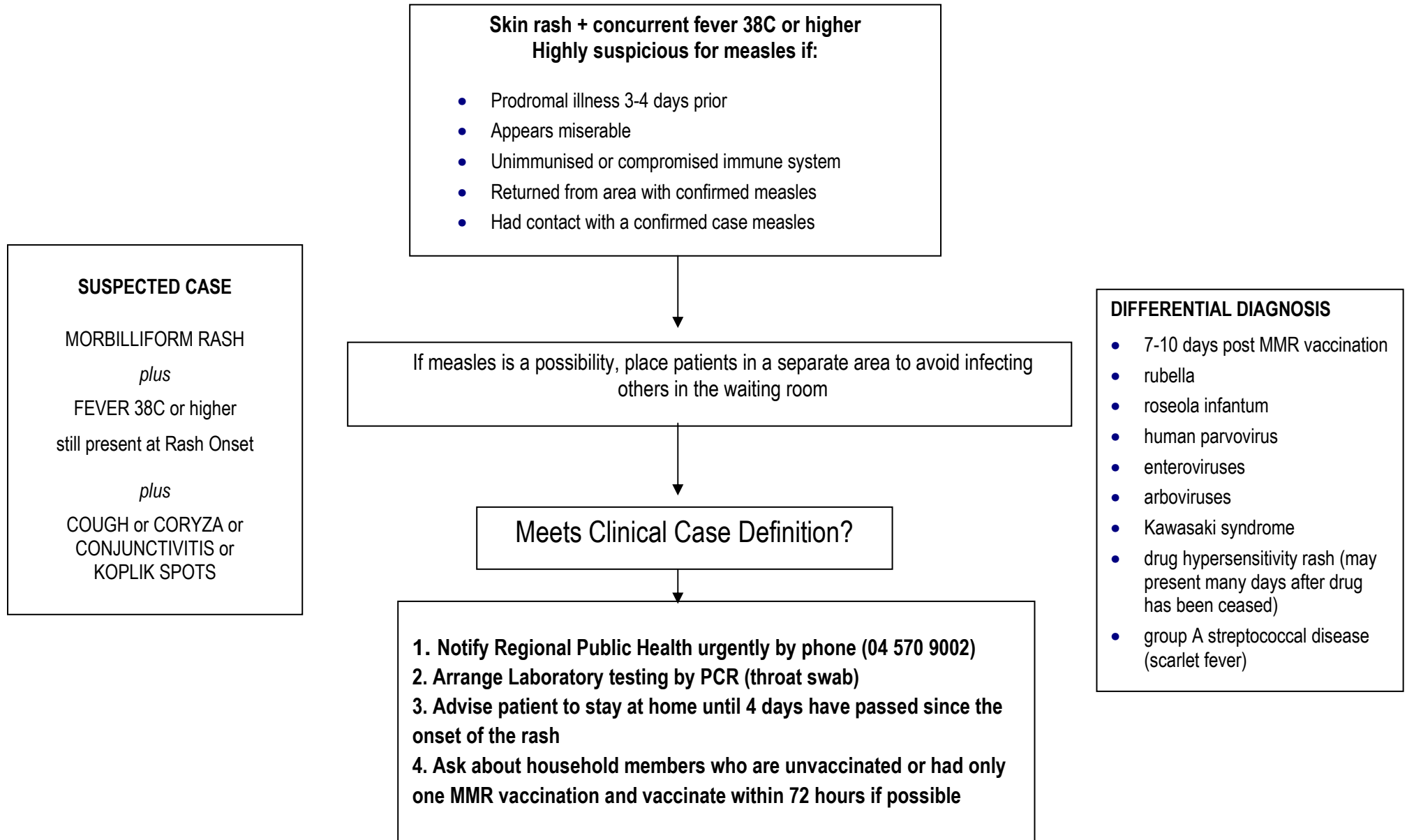
Further information and resources

- a simple resource for travellers for display in clinic waiting rooms
- advice and actions for health professionals if measles is suspected
- an alert poster that can be displayed at clinic entrances and reception desks

These resources can be found at www.rph.org.nz under the 'Health Professionals' tab or

Further advice for travellers is available at www.safetravel.govt.nz

Suspected cases of measles need to be confirmed as a matter of urgency.



Measles | Check your children are protected before the school holidays

Measles is a serious illness with one in three people with measles developing other complications. Last week there was a worrying increase in the number of measles cases in the Waikato region, with a large outbreak of 53 cases at Fraser High School and cases at other schools in Hamilton. There have been 182 measles cases in New Zealand this year; 33 of these people had to go to hospital. There are **no** cases of measles in the Wellington region at the moment.

Before people develop the measles rash they are very infectious and can pass the illness on to others. Outbreaks of measles in other regions of New Zealand could start quickly. Parents should be mindful that travel to and from Wellington in the July school holidays could mean families and children are in contact with measles, especially if:

- people are traveling to Auckland and Waikato, or have children from these areas coming to stay
- your child is involved in inter- school sports tournaments and events or going to ski fields
- you are planning travel to Vietnam or the Philippines where there are on-going measles outbreaks.

Immunisation

Immunisation is the best protection to stop you and your children getting measles. It takes 10 to 14 days from immunisation for you to be protected. To be fully immunised against measles you need two vaccinations. Unimmunised people are most at risk, schools in Waikato that have measles cases have asked children who have not had two doses of measles vaccine to stay off school until the outbreak is controlled.

We recommend that the following people contact their family doctor to confirm that they have had two doses of the measles vaccine:

- People born between 1996 to 1991 (now aged 18 to 23yrs). This was the time the immunisation schedule changed from 11 years to 4 years, children aged 5 to 10 at this time were offered catch up vaccines through schools, not all children received these.
- Children more than 4 years of age. You can also check their Wellchild book to confirm they have had two doses of the vaccine. If not, we recommend getting your child vaccinated now, the vaccine is free.
- If you are unsure if you are vaccinated against measles.

The following groups of people are regarded as **not** immune to measles:

- People younger than 45 years old (born after 01 January 1969) who have not had two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine after 12 months of age or have **not** had a laboratory confirmed positive measles result.
- Children over four years old who have not received their second dose of MMR.
- Infants under the age of 15 months who have not received their first routine dose of MMR vaccine. They are susceptible and rely on everyone else to be immune so that measles does not spread to them.

There is still time to get yourself and your children immunised before the school holidays. **Please read the attached factsheet for more information on measles and immunisation.**