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| To: | General Practices, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions |
| From: | Dr Annette Nesdale, Medical Officer of Health |
| Date: | 20 May 2016 |
| Title: | Public Health Alert: Measles |

Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

If you would like to receive this by email please advise RPH of your email on rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz.

All public health alerts are available at www.rph.org.nz (health professionals – public health alerts)

Measles Alert – 3 confirmed cases in Horowhenua

Three confirmed cases of measles have been notified in Horowhenua this week. These cases are linked to the outbreak in the Waikato. There are also measles outbreaks in Nelson and Northland.

In light of these on-going cases please maintain a high degree of suspicion in anyone presenting with a clinically consistent prodromal illness or fever and rash and;

- Ask about travel or contact with people from affected regions in New Zealand or overseas.
- Ensure your staff, including reception staff, are fully immunised against measles.
- Triage any suspected cases out of waiting areas, assess promptly and ensure staff wear appropriate PPE.
- Any consultation/waiting rooms that have been used by the suspected case need to remain vacant for 2 hours after the suspected case has left.
- Suspected cases should have a throat swab in viral transport media. Further advice on the diagnosis and laboratory testing can be found in appendix 2. GP's in the Otaki region should also refer to laboratory testing advice provided by MidCentral PHU.
- If you suspect a case of measles please notify the on-call medical officer of health on 04 570 9002 urgently.

Measles and schools or early childcare education centres

Schools directly affected by measles cases are excluding any susceptible students and staff for 14 days since their last contact with the ill person in accordance with public health requirements. All schools in the greater Wellington region have been sent an advisory today (see below) recommending they advise parents and staff about this so that any susceptible people can get vaccinated as soon as practicable. Staff and parents are also encouraged to find evidence (WellChild/ or Plunket book) that they / their child have had 2 doses of a measles vaccine after 12 months of age. Please be aware you may get telephone calls from parents or school staff requesting a printout of measles immunisations received.



Serology

- Serology should **not be** requested to determine a person's immunity, unless discussed with an infectious diseases physician/ paediatrician or medical officer of health.
- Charges may apply as this is not a diagnostic test.
- If measles immunity is unknown we recommend MMR vaccination (provided there are no vaccine contra-indications). There are no undue effects from vaccinating a person who is immune.

Measles vaccine

- Measles vaccine is free to anyone who needs it; this includes international students and adults who have not had 2 doses of a measles vaccine after 12 months of age.
- Adults born before 1 January 1969 are considered to have measles immunity as it was circulating in the community at this time.
- Unvaccinated people need 2 doses of MMR vaccine at least 4 weeks apart to be fully protected. Children who have had their 15 months MMR can have their 4 year old dose early as long as it is at least 4 weeks since the first dose.



Appendix 1: Letter sent to schools in the region

Regional Public Health
Better Health For The Greater Wellington Region



20 May 2016

Dear Principals and Boards of Trustees

Important health information – Measles preparedness

As you may be aware from news reports there are currently people with measles (English measles) in the Waikato, Northland, Nelson and Levin regions.

Measles is a highly infectious and serious illness. **If** a student or staff member is diagnosed with measles in your school, other students and staff (teaching, administration, sports coaches and any other staff that have face to face contact with students) will be required to have written evidence that they have either had two doses of measles vaccine (MMR) after they were 12 months of age or doctor diagnosed measles. This information can be found in you/your child's Wellchild or Plunket book or from a print out from your doctor.

People born before 1 January 1969 are assumed to have immunity to measles as it was circulating in the community at this time. Anyone who does not have evidence of measles immunity will be required to stay off school until 14 days after their contact with the person diagnosed with measles. We also recommend that pupils and staff going on school sports or other trips to regions where there are measles cases are fully vaccinated against measles.

We realise this will be very disruptive to the whole school community and recommend that you share this information with your staff and parents so that they can be prepared and have their documents ready. Measles vaccine is free from medical centres and we strongly encourage anyone who is not vaccinated to get their vaccine as soon as possible. We recommend you consider how your school will collect and store measles immunity information and how you will support the education needs of any students during the time they are required to be off school.

An information sheet about measles can be found at: www.rph.org.nz > Public health topics / Infectious diseases / Measles

Your school public health nurse can provide you with more information and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely

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

Dr Annette Nesdale
Medical Officer of Health
Regional Public Health

Appendix 2: Measles diagnosis and notification

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

