



Loudoun County Health Department

P.O. Box 7000
Leesburg VA 20177-7000



Environmental Health
Phone: 703 / 777-0234
Fax: 703 / 771-5023

Community Health
Phone: 703 / 777-0236
Fax: 703 / 771-5393

HEALTH ALERT

DATE: August 12, 2010

TO: Health Care Partners

FROM: David Goodfriend, MD 
District Director
Loudoun Health District

Keri Hall, MD, MS 
State Epidemiologist
Virginia Department of Health

RE: Measles Case and Exposures in Virginia

The Virginia Department of Health is investigating a confirmed measles case in a Loudoun County resident. Contact with this case has resulted in the exposure of residents of Loudoun and surrounding areas. For this reason, health care providers should increase their index of suspicion for measles in clinically compatible cases.

A statewide health alert about a separate, unrelated measles investigation, dated July 26, listed several key actions recommended for all health care providers who may treat patients presenting with measles-like symptoms. That health alert, and additional resources on measles, may be found at: <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/clinicians/index.htm>.

In patients with a febrile rash which you suspect is measles, we recommend the following:

- Immediately triage patients presenting with a febrile rash; do not allow such patients to remain in your waiting area.
- For patients being transmitted through EMS service, the receiving hospital should be notified prior to arrival, so that the masked patient may be directed immediately to a waiting exam room.
- Place such patients in a negative pressure private room, or if not available, a room with a closed door. This exam room should not be used for two hours after a patient suspected of having measles leaves.
- Use standard and airborne precautions.
- Only permit health care workers with immunity to measles to attend to the patient.

- **Contact your local health department immediately to report a suspected case and for additional guidance on testing and control measures. After hours call 1-866-531-3068.**
- Collect serum and a throat swab and coordinate with the local health department to test for measles IgM and IgG antibodies and viral isolation.

Persons who work in health care facilities (including volunteers, trainees, nurses, physicians, technicians, receptionists, and other clerical and support staff) are at increased risk of exposure to measles, and all persons who work in such facilities in any capacity should be immune to measles to prevent any potential outbreak. Health care workers can be presumed to be immune to measles if they have documentation of two doses of measles vaccine, laboratory evidence of immunity to measles, or documentation of physician-diagnosed measles. Birth prior to 1957 is not acceptable evidence of immunity for health care providers. Susceptible personnel who have been exposed to measles should be relieved from patient contact and excluded from the facility from the fifth to the 21st day after exposure, regardless of whether they received vaccine or immune globulin after the exposure. This highlights the importance of knowing the immune status of health care workers for measles prior to a possible exposure.

Measles, along with mumps and rubella, is easily preventable through the safe and effective MMR vaccine. The best protection against future measles cases is the on-time vaccination of all susceptible persons. Two doses are recommended for most individuals with the first dose given at age 12-15 months and the second prior to kindergarten entry (age 4-6 years). However, the second dose may be administered as early as 28 days following the first.

While few measles cases are reported in the U.S., the disease is common in many parts of the world, including popular tourist destinations. All persons who will be traveling internationally should be evaluated for measles immunity and vaccinated as needed.

Please contact either your local health department or the Virginia Department of Health at 804-864-8055 if you have any questions about this guidance.