

# Public Health Alert

Urgent information for health care professionals that may require action

**Issued August 8, 2013**

## **CONFIRMED CASE OF MEASLES IN OXFORD COUNTY**

Oxford County Public Health & Emergency Services has been notified of a lab confirmed case of measles in an unimmunized adult with recent travel from the Netherlands where a measles outbreak is occurring. Measles is a highly contagious disease and additional cases may occur in the community. As a result we are asking you to be aware of the following:

**If you suspect measles, please isolate the patient as soon as possible and contact Public Health immediately (519-539-9800 ext. 3500; after hours 519-533-0131)**

### **1. Clinical Presentation.**

- Symptoms include fever, coryza, cough, drowsiness, irritability, conjunctivitis, Koplik's spots (small white spots on the inside of the mouth and throat)
- 3 to 7 days after the start of symptoms a maculopapular rash appears on the face and then progresses down to the trunk and extremities which lasts about six days.

### **2. Testing**

**Please collect all of the following:**

- **Nasopharyngeal swab** (for viral detection by PCR) or aspirate or a throat swab obtained within 4 to 7 days after rash onset. Specimens should be collected using the Viral Transport Medium (VTM) collection kit. These swabs contain pink liquid medium
- **Urine.** Approximately 50 ml collected within 14 days after the onset of rash.
- **Acute serology:** A blood specimen (5ml collected in a serum tube) for measles antibodies (IgM and IgG) should be collected at the first visit (ideally within 7 days of rash onset)
- Ensure that the requisition indicates measles testing and mark the symptoms, date of onset, exposure history (if known) and vaccination history (if known).

### **3. Transmission, Incubation and Communicability**

- The virus is spread by droplets and direct contact with the nasal or throat secretions of an infected person. Measles is also easily spread through the airborne route.
- Symptoms of measles begin 7 to 18 days (usually around 10 days) after exposure to a case of measles
- Patients with measles are infectious four days prior to the onset of their rash and/or one day prior to the onset of the prodromal illness. They can remain infectious up to four days after the onset of the rash.

- Measles may be prevented in susceptible contacts if vaccine is given within 72 hours of exposure. Immune globulin may be given within 6 days of exposure if the susceptible contact is at high risk of complications.

#### **4. Infection Control**

- Try to schedule any patients with suspect measles at the end of the day to minimize exposure to others. Provide patients with a mask and keep them away from others.
- Health Care Workers (HCW) should be immune to prevent acquisition and transmission of measles to others. Since the measles virus is airborne, close or direct contact is NOT required for transmission.
- The only effective control of transmission of measles is immunization. Only the following should be accepted as proof of measles immunity for HCWs:
  - Documentation of receipt of 2 doses of live measles virus vaccine on or after the first birthday or
  - Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Only immune HCWs should be assigned to care for patients with known/suspected measles. If no immune staff are available and patient safety would be compromised by not allowing the susceptible HCW to attend the patient, the susceptible HCW must wear a fit-tested, seal checked N95 respirator. There is no efficacy data for N95 respirators for this application

#### **5. Immunization**

- When seeing patients please ensure that their MMR immunization is up-to-date.
- Public Health is currently reviewing the recommendation of the timing of the second dose of MMR for children and may recommend that this be done earlier than the 4-6 year old time period. More information on this proposed change will be coming shortly.

### **CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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This notice and links to further information will soon be posted on the Oxford County Public Health website at <http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/Partnersprofessionals/Healthprofessionals.aspx>