

21 November 2019

MEASLES ALERT

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is urging people to vaccinate against measles before travelling after a man was diagnosed with the disease on return from Samoa.

New Zealand, Tonga and Samoa are currently experiencing a widespread outbreak of measles.

Dr Catherine Bateman-Steel, Acting Director SESLHD Public Health Unit, said people who were in the following locations visited by the man while infectious should watch for symptoms until at least 8 December 2019.

Friday 15 November

- Fitness First, 2 Market St, Sydney, approximately 2.00pm to 7.30pm
- Train from Arncliffe Station to Town Hall Station approximately 1.00pm
- Train from Town Hall Station to Arncliffe Station approximately 7.00pm

Saturday 16 November

- Men's Headquarters hairdresser, 18 Firth St, Arncliffe, approximately 8.00am to 9.45am
- Nick's Seafood Restaurant, the Promenade, Cockle Bay Wharf, Darling Harbour, approximately 7.00pm to 11.00pm

Sunday 17 November

- Miranda Medical Centre, 573 The Kingsway Miranda approximately 8.00am to 9.00am

Tuesday 19 November to Wednesday 20 November

- St George Hospital Emergency Department, approximately 7.00pm on 19 November to 3.00am on 20 November.

"Symptoms of measles include fever, sore eyes and a cough followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash spreading from the head and neck to the rest of the body," Dr Bateman-Steel said.

"If you develop symptoms please arrange to see your GP as soon as possible, ensuring you ring ahead and do not wait in the waiting room with other patients, as measles is highly contagious.

"While the risk of infection is low in fully-vaccinated people, health experts urge anyone who comes into contact with someone who has measles to remain alert for symptoms and seek medical care if they develop."

SESLHD is urging people travelling overseas to ensure they are fully vaccinated before heading off. Outbreaks of measles in popular tourist destinations means the risk for measles being imported into Australia is high.

Dr Bateman-Steel said the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and highly effective, with two doses providing lifelong protection in 99 out of 100 people who are vaccinated.

“NSW Health offers free MMR vaccine via GPs for anyone born during or after 1966 who hasn’t already had two doses. If you are unsure whether you have had two doses, it is safe to have another dose.”

Measles is highly contagious and is spread through coughing or sneezing by someone who is unwell with the disease and can remain in the air even after the person has left the room.

The NSW Government is investing \$130 million in the 2019-20 Immunisation Program budget, including Commonwealth and state vaccines.

The latest Annual Immunisation Coverage Report shows vaccination rates in NSW are at their highest level ever, with more than 95 per cent of five year olds vaccinated against measles.

For more information on measles visit:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/default.aspx>