

6 December, 2016

Measles alert – Sydney Central Business District

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's (SESLHD) Public Health Unit (PHU) are issuing a warning to the public to be alert to symptoms of measles, after an adult was reported to have been in the Sydney Central Business District (CBD), with the highly contagious disease between 26 November and 4 December 2016.

The adult reported case recently arrived from overseas, and was living in the CBD and visited multiple locations while infectious, including the Emergency Department at Sydney Hospital on Macquarie Street, GP clinics in George Street, Sydney and Darlinghurst, and a coffee shop on Harris Street, Ultimo, during this period.

Dr Catherine Bateman-Steel, Acting Director, Public Health Unit, SESLHD, said anyone who has been in these locations needs to be alert to the symptoms of measles in the coming weeks.

"The measles virus is highly contagious and is spread through the air by someone who is unwell with the disease," Dr Bateman-Steel said.

"Symptoms 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. Measles can have serious complications, particularly for young children.

"If you develop the symptoms of measles, seek medical advice. Please call ahead to your doctor or emergency department so that arrangements can be made to keep you away from others to minimise the risk of infection," Dr Bateman-Steel said.

Children or adults born during or since 1966 who do not have documented evidence of receiving two doses of measles vaccine, or evidence of previous measles infection, are likely to be susceptible to measles and should be vaccinated.

People who have been vaccinated as a child may still be susceptible if they have a condition which affects their immune system.

Parents of infants or other people who are not fully vaccinated against measles are to be on the lookout for symptoms

"For young children, the measles vaccine is recommended at 12 months and again at 18 months of age. Two doses of the vaccine are required for lifelong protection.

"Anyone born after 1965 should have two doses of the vaccine, at least four weeks apart. NSW Health offers free Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine through GPs for people born after 1965 with no records of having received two doses of MMR vaccine," Dr Bateman-Steel said.

People who travel overseas should ensure that they are fully vaccinated against measles.

Members of the public who may have been in the same locations as the adult reported case during this period and are displaying symptoms of measles should seek urgent medical advice via a GP clinic, medical centres, or, if urgent, to an hospital emergency department, and, where possible, to call ahead so that arrangements can be made to minimise the risk of transmission to others.

For more information visit:

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles_Factsheet.aspx