

9 April, 2018

## MEASLES ALERT

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District is urging anyone who recently visited Ramsgate, Kogarah, Watsons Bay or the Rozelle Childcare Centre, Lilyfield to be alert to the symptoms of measles after a person visited these locations while infectious.

The person, a woman in her forties, and now isolated and recovering, is the sixth measles case notified to NSW who contracted the infection in Asia in the last month. She visited the following areas between 31 March and 7 April while infectious.

- Coles supermarket, Ramsgate, 10.45-11.30am on 31 March
- Doyles Restaurant, Watsons Bay, 1.30-3.30pm on 1 April
- Rozelle Childcare Centre, Lilyfield on 4 April
- Kogarah Railway Medical Centre, 1.30-2.30pm and Terry White Chemmart, Kogarah 2.30-3.00pm on 6 April
- St George Hospital, the case passed through the Emergency Department at 1.30pm on 7 April.

Public Health Units are providing preventative treatment to susceptible people at the medical centre and childcare centre. There is no ongoing risk at these sites.

Dr Catherine Bateman-Steele, Acting Public Health Director South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, said people in the 20-40 year age bracket may have missed out on the full vaccination program for measles, which was changed in 1998, including a national school-based catch-up, and mistakenly believe they are protected against the disease.

“Anyone born after 1965 who does not have records of receiving two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, or evidence of previous measles infection, may be susceptible to measles, and should visit their GP to have the free vaccination,” Dr Bateman-Steele said.

“The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and highly effective protection against measles, and is available for free for those aged 1 to 52 from your GP.

“If you are unsure whether you have had two doses, it is quite safe to have another dose.”

Measles is highly infectious and spread through the air by someone who is unwell with the disease. The time from exposure to the onset of symptoms is typically about 10 days, but can be as long as 18 days so people should remain alert for symptoms until 25 April.

Symptoms include fever, sore eyes and a cough followed a few days later by a non-itchy rash, when the fever is still present. Measles can have serious complications, particularly for young children or people with weakened immune systems.

Dr Bateman-Steele said people with measles symptoms should stay home from school or work and not go out in public.

“We recommend medical attention be sought if you or your child shows these symptoms, but you should call the doctor’s surgery **before** you go in so they can make arrangements to see you without the risk of you spreading the virus to other people,” Dr Bateman-Steele said.

Measles is very common in some countries. People who travel overseas should discuss with their doctor before they travel whether they need the measles vaccination.

Protecting children from potentially deadly diseases is a key priority for the NSW Government, with the 2017-18 Immunisation Program budget approximately \$130 million, 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 94 per cent of five year olds vaccinated against measles.

NSW children at one and five years of age have some of the highest measles vaccine uptake in Australia, boosted by programs including the:

- Save the Date app campaign (\$5.5 million invested since 2013)
- Aboriginal Immunisation Health Worker program (\$1.3 million annually)
- New NSW Government laws that came in on 1 January preventing parents who object to vaccination from enrolling their children in preschools and early childhood centres.

For more information visit:

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles\\_Factsheet.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles_Factsheet.aspx).