

11 April 2019

MEASLES ALERT – EASTERN SUBURBS

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is urging people to be on alert for symptoms of measles after a man acquired the highly-contagious disease while travelling through South East Asia.

The man, who is in his 20s and who believed he had been vaccinated as a child, brings the number of people infectious with measles in the State to 36 since last Christmas.

He was unknowingly infectious at the following locations:

April 2

- Stayed at a shared accommodation facility at 7 Park Parade, Bondi, until April 9

April 3

- Bondi Bowling Club, 1 Warners Ave, North Bondi, 4.00pm - 9.00pm

April 8

- Bondi Junction Medical and Dental Centre, 3A Bronte Road, Bondi Junction, 1.00pm - 3.30pm
- Coles, Bondi Junction Eastgate, 3pm - 4pm

The SESLHD Public Health Unit is working with a number of services to contact people present at the same time and is offering preventive treatment, if needed.

Professor Mark Ferson, Director, SESLHD Public Health Unit, said while the above locations pose no ongoing risk to the public, people who were there at the same time as the man should look out for symptoms up to at least 26 April 2019.

“Children and adults who have been inadvertently exposed are at risk of developing measles if they were not already immune,” Professor Ferson said.

“If you develop symptoms please call ahead to your GP so that you do not wait in the waiting room and infect other patients.

“The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and highly effective protection against measles. 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 quite safe to have another dose.”

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. Two doses of measles vaccine provides lifelong protection in 99 out of 100 people who are vaccinated.

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.

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.

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.

The NSW Government has invested approximately \$130 million in the 2018-19 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:

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