

8 May, 2019

NEW MEASLES CASE IN RETURNED TRAVELLER

A new case of measles has been reported in a young woman recently returned from travel to South East Asia.

The woman, whose vaccination status is unknown, spent time in the Sydney CBD, and used public transport between Town Hall and Artarmon while unknowingly infectious.

NSW Health Director of Communicable Diseases Dr Vicky Sheppard said none of the locations visited by the woman pose an ongoing risk.

This incident again underlines the risk of measles in our region and NSW Health urges all travellers to ensure they are protected against measles before leaving Australia.

While infectious the woman was in the following locations:

Monday 29 April 2019

- Train from Town Hall station to Artarmon station (departing approx. 1:30pm)
- N90 bus from Artarmon back to Town Hall departing approx. 4:15am

Tuesday 30 April 2019

- Train from Town Hall station to Artarmon station (departing approx. 1:30pm)
- N90 bus from Artarmon back to Town Hall departing approx. 2:15am

Wednesday 01 May 2019

- Took train from Town Hall station to Artarmon station (departing 11:30am)
- Took N90 bus from Artarmon back to Town Hall (departing approx. 12:30am)

Saturday 04 May 2019

- Took train from Town Hall station to Artarmon station departing approx. 9:00am
- Took train from Artarmon station to Town Hall station departing approx. 7:15pm

Sunday 05 May 2019

- Capitol Square Atrium Mezzanine – Purikura Games Centre (730-742 George Street Haymarket) between 3:00pm and 5:30pm

Monday 06 May 2019

- World Square Shopping Centre (644 George Street, Sydney) between 3:00pm and 6:30pm

People in the same locations at the same time, who may be highly susceptible to measles such as:

- Children under the age of 12 months,
- people with a weakened immune system (e.g. from cancer therapy or high dose steroid use),
- pregnant women,

should contact their local public health unit on 1300 066 055, as preventive injections can be administered to people up to 6 days after exposure, for highly susceptible people.

All people who were at the same locations at the same time as the woman should be alert for signs and symptoms of measles until 24 May 2019, as it can take up to 18 days for symptoms to appear following exposure to a person with measles.

“Symptoms to watch out for include fever, sore eyes and a cough followed three or four days later by a red, spotty rash that spreads from the head to the rest of the body,” Dr Sheppeard said.

“Measles is highly contagious and is spread in the air through coughing or sneezing by someone who is unwell with the disease.

“Anyone who develops symptoms of measles should phone their GP to ensure they don’t wait alongside other patients before seeing their doctor.

“People born before 1966 are likely to have had measles as a child and are considered immune. For people born during or after 1966, the best protection against measles is receiving two doses of measles vaccine.

“The measles-mumps-rubella vaccine is safe and provides effective protection against measles,” Dr Sheppeard said.

“It’s free in NSW for anyone born during or after 1966 who hasn’t already had two doses. If you’re unsure whether you’ve had two doses, it’s safe to have another.”

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.

Protecting children from potentially deadly diseases is a key priority for the NSW Government, which 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:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/key-facts.aspx>