

6 June, 2019

MEASLES ALERT FOR AIRPORT PLANE AND TRAIN PASSENGERS

Passengers on an international flight and a train between the International Airport and Leumeah are advised to be alert for signs and symptoms of measles, after a man was diagnosed with the infection following return from Bangladesh.

The man, aged in his forties, whose vaccination status is unknown, was infectious on Cathay Pacific flight CX139 from Hong Kong, which arrived at Sydney T1 International Terminal on Tuesday 28 May at 7:40pm.

He then travelled by train from Sydney Airport on the Macarthur line, departing at 9:11pm, and arriving at Leumeah at 9:58pm.

The local public health unit is working with medical services visited by the man to contact people directly who may have been present at the same time.

NSW Health Director of Communicable Diseases, Dr Vicky Sheppeard, said none of the locations visited by the man pose an ongoing risk.

It can take up to 18 days for symptoms to appear following exposure to a person with measles. People who travelled on the same plane and train, and those in the International Airport Terminal (including the baggage carousels, customs and arrivals areas) between 7:40pm and 9:30pm on 28 May should be alert for signs and symptoms of measles until 20 June, 2019.

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

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

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

“It’s free 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.”

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

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.

They should limit their exposure to others and seek medical care if symptoms develop. Two doses of measles vaccine provides lifelong protection in 99 out of 100 people who are vaccinated.

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>