

Measles Alert- May, 2011

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus and is spread from person to person through the air by infectious droplets.

Measles symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, loss of appetite, pink eye and a rash. The rash usually lasts 5 – 6 days and beginning at the hairline, moving to the face and upper neck, and proceeding down the body. In the past week, Massachusetts identified 5 new cases of measles, ranging in age from 16 months to 65 years. All confirmed and suspect cases have either unknown or undocumented history of measles vaccination. Maine clinicians are asked to increase surveillance for rash illness suggestive of measles to help with early identification of potential cases and assist in the prevention of spread of disease in Maine.

Diagnosis

Maine CDC requests that clinicians report suspect case of measles to 1-800-821-5821. Maine CDC recommends collecting clinical specimens and advising suspect patients to remain at home until test results are known to prevent exposing others to the measles virus. Measles testing is available at Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL). Laboratory tests for acute measles infection include viral culture, serology and PCR. Acceptable specimens include throat swabs, NP swabs, urine and blood (requires acute and convalescent specimens).
http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/etl/micro/measles_lsis.pdf

Case Management

It takes an average of 10 – 12 days from exposure to the first symptom which is usually fever. The measles rash does not usually appear until approximately 14 days after exposure, which is 2 – 3 days after the fever

begins. Measles is infectious for 4 days prior to 4 days after the onset of rash. All suspect patients should be placed in a separate waiting area or a private room with negative pressure.

Control Measures

Maine CDC will work with patients, and clinicians to identify all exposed contacts and to assess individuals for evidence of immunity. Measles vaccine may prevent disease if given within 72 hours of exposure.

Vaccinate

- Children. All children >12 months of age should receive their first dose of MMR at the 12-15 month routine health care visit, and every effort should be made to identify and vaccinate children who are not up-to date. All school-aged children should have two doses of MMR vaccine.
- Adults. All adults should have acceptable proof of immunity to measles. Certain groups at high risk should have received two doses of MMR, such as international travelers, health care workers, and college students. Women are advised not to receive any live virus vaccine during pregnancy including MMR.

Please report any suspicious cases and suspect cases of measles to Maine CDC at

1-800-821-5821