

# MEASLES ALERT

Information for NSW Emergency Departments  
Please distribute this information to all staff



Health

H19/29963

1. Cases of measles continue to be imported into NSW from overseas
2. Locally-acquired cases have begun to occur and more are likely in the coming weeks.
3. Make sure you have triage measures to identify and *immediately* isolate suspected measles cases
4. Suspect measles in those presenting with fever and rash irrespective of travel history

## Measles in NSW

- Since December 2018, **23** cases of measles have been notified in NSW
- Several cases have spent time in highly populated locations such as hospitals, shopping centres, and backpacker hostels while infectious.
- At highest risk of infection are those who are too young to be vaccinated (<12 months), and those who have not received two doses of measles containing vaccine.
- Suspect measles in people with fever and rash **irrespective** of travel history.

## How does measles present?

- Two to four days of non-specific illness with fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.
- A maculo-papular rash then typically begins on the face and neck and becomes generalised.
- Cases have occurred in people reporting prior vaccination – these tend to present atypically and may have a distorted temporal progression and/or milder clinical manifestation. Maintain a high index of suspicion if exposure to earlier cases is possible.
- Measles cases are infectious from the day before the prodrome to 4 days after the onset of rash.

## Maintain effective triage and case management

- **Isolate** - patients with fever and rash in a separate room on arrival.
- **Notify** - call your local public health unit (PHU) on 1300 066 055 **immediately** about suspected cases – don't wait for test results before calling. The earlier a PHU knows about a suspected case the more effective containment interventions can be.
- **Test** – collect a nose and throat viral swab and a first pass urine sample for nucleic acid testing and blood for measles IgG and IgM. Mark specimens as URGENT. Your PHU can assist in expediting testing.
- PCR for wild and vaccine strain with 4-hour turn-around is available 24/7 at Westmead (CIDM-LS); Prince of Wales (SAVID-SEALS) laboratory can also perform rapid PCR by arrangement
- An enhanced triage flow chart is available on the NSW Health measles website <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/resources.aspx>
- **Continue** to display travel posters and measles posters and be on the look-out for new imports following holiday travel, and locally acquired cases: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/default.aspx>

## Further Information:

- Contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Vicky Sheppeard'.

Dr Vicky Sheppeard  
**Director, Communicable Disease Branch**  
28 March 2019