



COUNTY OF IMPERIAL

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

May 1, 2019

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Measles Cases Increase in U.S.

Measles continues to circulate in many countries, including Europe, Asia and Africa. International travel, domestic travel through international airports, and contact with international visitors can pose a risk for exposure to measles. When measles is imported into the United States, additional transmission can occur locally.

Between January 1 and April 29, 2019, a total of 704 confirmed cases of measles have been reported in 22 states, including 38 cases in California. This is the greatest number of cases reported in the U.S. since 1994 and since measles was declared eliminated in 2000. No cases have been reported to date in Imperial County.

In addition to California, the states that have reported cases to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Texas, Tennessee, and Washington.

In California, outbreaks have been linked to international travel followed by transmission in local communities. Several measles cases were not initially suspected because patients reported measles immunization or prior measles disease. These patients were not isolated when admitted to the hospital with febrile rash illnesses and a history of recent travel outside North America. It is important to note that a self-reported history of measles infection or immunization does not rule out a diagnosis of measles.

This advisory is intended to summarize clinical guidance and to discuss which patients should be prioritized for measles testing. Clinicians should consider measles in patients with fever and a descending rash in a person with a history of travel or contact with someone who has traveled outside North America whether or not the patient has had two doses of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine or prior measles disease.

Symptoms plus risk factors should make providers suspect measles:

Symptoms

- Fever, including subjective fever;
- Rash that starts on the head and descends
- Usually at least one of the following: cough, coryza or conjunctivitis.

Risk factors

- Travel outside of North America, transit through U.S. international airports, interaction with foreign visitors, including at a U.S. tourist attraction, or travel to areas of the U.S. with ongoing measles transmission in the 3 weeks prior to symptom onset
- Confirmed measles cases in the community
- Never immunized with measles vaccine and born in 1957 or later.

Unless a local outbreak occurs and in light of concerns about vaccine availability in the highest risk groups such as children, Imperial County Public Health Department makes the following recommendations. Individuals for whom vaccination is **not** indicated include those who have documentation of two doses of measles-containing vaccine or ever had a positive titer for measles. For adults who have documentation of only one dose or were born prior to 1957 and may be at increased risk of measles exposure such as international travelers, a titer can be obtained. If positive, a second dose is not required. Anyone currently or previously in the U.S. military or Coast Guard is likely immune due to the vaccination policy. However, if the documentation is lacking, a titer can be obtained in lieu of additional vaccine.

If after consideration of symptoms and risk factors measles is suspected, isolate the patient immediately and contact the local health department by calling (442) 265-1464. See complete infection control guidance at <http://tinyurl.com/yxes3amk>

If advised to test for measles by the health department, submit a specimen for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing. PCR is the preferred testing method for measles, and can only be performed in public health laboratories. Measles IgM testing is frequently falsely positive and is not recommended.

Full clinical guidance from the California Department of Public Health is available at:

<http://tinyurl.com/y6bkg4ea>

Guidance from CDC for health-care professionals is at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>

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