

PRESS RELEASE:  
April 3, 2009

STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONFIRM FOUR CASES OF  
MEASLES IN SOUTHWEST REGION

## Departments Urge Public to Self-Reporting Suspected Measles

**HARRISBURG** – The Pennsylvania Department of Health, in coordination with the Allegheny County Health Department and UPMC's Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh today confirmed they are investigating four confirmed cases of measles seen at Children's Hospital.

Exposures to measles may have occurred in the Children's Hospital Emergency Department on:

- March 10, at any time
- Between 8 p.m. on March 21 and 11 a.m. on March 22;
- Between 6 p.m. on March 25 and 5 a.m. March 26; and
- Between 5 p.m. on March 28 and 4 a.m. on March 29.

Exposure may have also occurred at the Children's Hospital 3rd floor Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialty Clinic on March 23. All persons known to have been in the Emergency Department or ENT Specialty Clinic during those times are being contacted for evaluation as a precaution.

The health departments are recommending the following to anyone who came to Children's Hospital Emergency Department or ENT Specialty Clinic on the third floor of the DeSoto wing during the periods mentioned above:

- If you or your children are susceptible to measles and have had symptoms of fever and rash since the beginning of March, contact your primary health care provider immediately and let him/her know that you may have been exposed to measles.
- If you or your children are susceptible to measles and become ill with symptoms of measles one to two weeks after possible exposure, contact your primary care provider immediately and let him/her know that you may have been exposed to measles.

The following groups of individuals are susceptible to becoming infected with measles:

- Infants who are too young to have been immunized (less than one year of age);
- Persons who were vaccinated with an inactivated vaccine, which was used from 1963 through 1967, and have not been revaccinated;
- Persons born after 1957 who have only received one vaccine;
- Those who refused vaccination; and
- Those from a part of the world where there is low vaccination coverage or circulating measles.

Health care providers who suspect measles should call the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 877-PA-Health or the Allegheny County Health Department for consultation and to arrange testing.

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus. Symptoms will begin one to two weeks after exposure and include a runny nose, watery eyes, cough and a high fever. After four days, a raised, red rash starts to spread on the face, down the body and out to the arms and legs. The rash usually lasts four to seven days.

An individual with measles can spread the virus to others for four days before and four days after the rash begins. It is spread by infected droplets during sneezing or coughing, touching contaminated objects, and direct contact with infected nasal or throat secretions. Infected droplets and secretions can remain contagious on surfaces for up to two hours.

Complications from measles can include ear infection, diarrhea and pneumonia, encephalitis (an inflammation of the brain), and even death. Measles can also cause miscarriages or premature delivery in pregnant women.

The Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine is given to toddlers when they are 12 to 15 months of age, and a second MMR vaccine is required for all Pennsylvania school children. However, individuals who have received only one dose of the vaccine, instead of the recommended two doses, may still be susceptible to the virus. The MMR

vaccine can help prevent infection if it is given within three days of exposure. There is no risk in getting an additional dose of the MMR vaccine for individuals who may have already received it.

For more information about measles and the MMR vaccine, visit [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us).

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