

## ANOTHER MEASLES ALERT

There has been a second measles outbreak in Christchurch unrelated to the previous outbreak in February. Southern and Nelson Marlborough DHBs have cases as well. The source case has not been identified but the outbreak became apparent when five confirmed cases with onset dates of a rash within five days of each other, were notified earlier this month.

Exposure appears to have occurred in Queenstown airport and on Air New Zealand flights from Queenstown to Christchurch and possibly Christchurch to Nelson, on 22<sup>nd</sup> of March. Subsequently there has been exposure from these secondary cases to a large number of people in the South Island, if not throughout New Zealand.

A national media release is to be made and doctors in Canterbury will be kept informed of significant developments. This communication will be posted on HealthPathways as a public health alert. The message to the public will be to check their MMR vaccination status, to be vaccinated on time, and to have catch up vaccinations if any vaccinations have been missed.

### Measles Information

Symptoms usually take about 10 days to develop but may take as long as 21 days.

Doctors are requested to:

- 1) **consider the diagnosis** (and look for Koplik spots) in suspected cases, especially children, with symptoms (fever, maculopapular rash, cough, coryza and conjunctivitis),
- 2) **request serology and a nasopharyngeal swab for PCR** to confirm the diagnosis
- 3) **notify on suspicion** (form on the Pegasus intranet)
- 4) **inform C&PH of possible susceptible\* contacts** who may require immune globulin.

### Prophylaxis for susceptible\* contacts

MMR prophylaxis is appropriate if given within 72 hours of exposure and immune globulin is a consideration for pregnant women and infants less than 6 months of age if no more than 6 days have passed since exposure. Inform this office if you see any contacts in this category.

\* Contacts are considered to be susceptible if **none** of the following apply:

- born before 1969 (measles vaccine was introduced in 1969)
- confirmed measles infection in the past
- documented vaccination with two doses of MMR vaccine
- documented immunity to measles.

Doctors are referred to HealthPathways>Measles, for more details.  
Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Ramon Pink  
**Medical Officer of Health**