



State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals Immunization Program

DATE: February 3, 2015

TO: Health Care Providers

FROM: Frank J. Welch, MD, Medical Director
DHH OPH Immunization Program

Please route to:

- Clinical supervisor
- Medical director
- Clinic manager
- Clinic staff
- Pharmacy
- Vaccine staff

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DHH OPH Immunization Program

Subject: Be Alert for Measles in Louisiana, and Report Suspect Cases

Healthcare providers in Louisiana are requested to aid in the national measles outbreak investigation by considering measles when evaluating febrile rash illnesses and by reporting suspected measles cases promptly to the Louisiana, Office of Public Health - Immunization Program Office at 504-838-5300 or the Louisiana Epidemiology Hotline after hours at 1-800-256-2748.

By Louisiana statute, measles is to be reported immediately upon suspicion.

The symptoms of concern are:

- fever of 101° or more; and
- generalized maculopapular rash, usually beginning on the face and spreading to the trunk, with the presence of one or more of the following:
 1. cough,
 2. coryza, or
 3. conjunctivitis.

If a patient presents with any of these symptoms, take the following steps:

1. isolate the patient;
 - a. In a hospital setting, negative air pressure rooms are recommended
2. ensure all visitors and staff working with the patient use airborne precautions;
3. obtain diagnostic specimens; and
4. report the patient to the health department.

Testing for confirmation may include the following:

- serology on a single specimen for IgM testing, and
- isolation and/or positive PCR of measles virus from a clinical specimen.

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Measles (Rubeola) is a highly contagious febrile rash illness caused by a paramyxovirus transmitted via the respiratory route. The incubation period averages 10-12 days and 14 days from exposure to rash onset (range 7-18 days). The prodrome generally lasts 2-4 days and is characterized by fever, increasing in stepwise fashion and often peaking at 103°-105°F. Fever is followed by the onset of one or more of cough, coryza, and/or conjunctivitis. Koplik spots, if present, are considered to be pathognomonic for measles and appear as punctate blue-white spots on the bright red background of the buccal mucosa, occurring 1-2 days before the onset of the rash to 1-2 days afterwards. The measles rash is a maculopapular eruption that begins at the hairline and gradually proceeds to face and upper neck and downwards and outward from there. The maculopapular lesions are generally discreet but may become confluent. Other symptoms of measles can include anorexia, diarrhea (especially in infants), and generalized lymphadenopathy. Complications can include otitis media, pneumonia, encephalitis, seizures and death.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that infants aged 6-11 months should receive 1 dose of MMR vaccine before departure from the United States for international travel. These children should then be revaccinated with 2 doses of MMR vaccine, the first at age 12-15 months (12 months if the child is in an area where disease risk is high) and the second dose at least 4 weeks later.

All healthcare facilities should ensure that they have updated documentation of immunity status for all staff. Documentation of immunity status includes birth prior to 1957, written record of receipt of two MMRs, or positive serologic titers.

Further information about measles can be found on the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>.

For submission of specimens to the Louisiana OPH Laboratory, please contact Virology at 225-219-5263 for instructions.

To report any suspected cases of measles, you may call the DHH- OPH Immunization Program Office during working hours at 504-838-5300 or the Louisiana Epidemiology Hotline after hours at 1-800-256-2748. Thank You!