



News for Immediate Release

July 14, 2011

Department of Health Announces Possible Measles Exposure in Berks County

Harrisburg –The state Department of Health is advising the public of a possible case of measles exposure in Morgantown, Berks County.

A person who was diagnosed with the measles may have exposed other people to the disease on Monday, July 11, between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., at the Rite Aid Drug Store, 3145 Main St., in Morgantown.

Most people in the United States are immune to measles, either because they received the Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine in childhood or because they were exposed to measles in the pre-vaccine era.

However, the following groups of individuals are at risk of becoming infected with measles:

- Infants less than one year of age who are too young to have received the MMR vaccine;
- 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 dose of MMR vaccine;
- Those who refused vaccination; and
- Those from parts of the world where there is low vaccination coverage or circulating measles.

If you or your children are at risk for measles and become ill with the symptoms of this disease (see below) one to two weeks after possible exposure, you should tell your health care provider that you've been exposed to measles so that precautions can be taken to avoid exposing anyone else.

Health care providers who treat patients with suspected cases of measles should call the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH 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 MMR vaccine is given to toddlers when they are 12 to 15 months of age, and a second dose 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 at risk of infection with this 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 people who can't receive the MMR vaccine (pregnant women, infants under six months of age, persons with compromised immune systems), or if it has been more than three days since your exposure, a dose of immune globulin can provide protection up to six days after the date of exposure.

The Department of Health is offering immune globulin at a special clinic to be held Saturday, July 16, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Berks County State Health Center in the Reading State Office Building, on 625 Cherry Street, Reading, Pa., 19602. Appointments are not necessary.

For more information about measles, call 1-877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258) or visit www.health.state.pa.us.

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