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Measles Case Confirmed in Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County - Stanislaus County Public Health has confirmed a case of measles in an unvaccinated child who had recently traveled out of the country. Public Health investigations into possible exposures to the public when the child was infectious are ongoing. At this time, all known public exposures have occurred in healthcare settings. Exposed persons will receive follow-ups from Public Health and the healthcare facility where exposure occurred.

Measles is one of the most contagious infectious diseases and spreads easily among exposed close contacts who do not have immunity to the virus from either measles vaccination or a history of previous measles infection. The virus spreads person-to-person via direct contact with respiratory droplets (from coughing and sneezing) and airborne (breathing the air that was breathed by someone with measles). The airborne particles can linger in the air even after an infectious person has left the area.

“Measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can quickly spread among people who are not immune to it,” says Dr. Thea Papasozomenos, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer.

“Unfortunately, it can cause serious health complications in some people. The best way to protect yourself and your family against measles is by getting vaccinated.”

Measles typically begins with symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Within a few days, a characteristic rash develops, starting on the face and spreading to the rest of the body. Complications of measles can include pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and, in severe cases, death. People at highest risk of severe measles complications include: children younger than 5 years; adults older than 20 years; pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems.

Anyone identified as exposed to a measles case will need to have proof of immunity to measles established from vaccination history or other means. If you develop symptoms, **call your healthcare provider right away**. Please make sure to call any medical facility **before** going there and tell the healthcare professional who assists in setting up the appointment that you may have been exposed to measles to ensure that the facility can take measures to protect other patients and visitors.

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Measles is still common in many parts of the world. Measles cases in the United States often originate from unvaccinated international travelers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises all international travelers to be protected against measles, regardless of destination. While the first shot of the two-dose measles vaccine series is not scheduled to be given until a child is at least 12 months old, an early dose can be given to infants 6 months through 11 months who will be traveling. Any measles vaccine dose given before the age of 12 months will need to be repeated. The vaccine should be given at least two weeks before any planned travel to allow time for immunity to develop. www.cdc.gov/measles/plan-for-travel.html

Public Health encourages the community to review their measles vaccination status. Unvaccinated individuals who are one year and older should receive measles vaccination to protect themselves and those around them. The MMR vaccine is safe and effective. Contact your local pharmacy or healthcare provider to get vaccinated. For more information about measles, vaccination, and preventive measures, please visit schsa.org.

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