

Rubella/ Measles Alert

April 17, 2009

From the Wisconsin Division of Public Health

Below you will find excerpts from a rubella advisory posted today on the State of Minnesota Health Alert Network. The information pertains to a confirmed case of rubella in a 31 year-old female resident of Dakota County. Dakota County is in eastern Minnesota, southeast of the Twin Cities and borders Wisconsin. As there is significant interaction of Minnesota and Wisconsin residents in this area there is a real possibility that transmission could occur to residents of Wisconsin.

You will also find below information pertaining to a confirmed case of measles in Spencer, Iowa. Spencer is a small town in Clay County in northwest Iowa. The population of Clay County is ~17,000. The information was posted today on the CDC's Epidemic Information Exchange (EpiX) network. It is our understanding that measles is also presently occurring in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

These cases serve as a reminder to evaluate rash fever illnesses carefully and to remind health care providers to report any rash fever illness where rubella or measles is suspected to the local health department immediately.

Attached you will find disease fact sheets for rubella and measles. Additional information regarding the diagnosis, testing and control measures for rubella and measles can be found on the Wisconsin Immunization Program website at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/index.htm. Questions can be referred to the Wisconsin Immunization Program at 608-267-9959 or to Dan Hopfensperger at dan.hopfensperger@wisconsin.gov.

Rubella Health Alert Notice

A case of rubella has been identified in a 31-year-old Asian, non-Hispanic female residing in Dakota County, Minnesota. The case is laboratory-confirmed by rubella IgM serology and rubella total antibody seroconversion between two specimens drawn 11 days apart. Her symptoms are consistent with rubella. She has documentation of a negative rubella antibody titer during pregnancy two years ago, no documentation of rubella-containing vaccination, and no prior history of rubella disease. Rubella is not known to be circulating in the United States, although 20% - 50% of rubella infections are subclinical and may be unrecognized or undetected. Because the case has not traveled outside Minnesota, and a source case has not been identified, it is possible that undiagnosed cases of rubella are present in Minnesota. The most recent previously reported rubella case in Minnesota occurred in 2000.

Rash onset occurred on Thursday, April 2, 2009. Rubella is infectious from 7 days before to 7 days after rash onset; therefore, the case is considered to have been potentially infectious from March 26 through April 9, 2009. The incubation period for rubella is generally 16 to 18 days (range: 14 to 21 days); therefore, secondary cases would be expected to have onset between April 9 and April 30, 2009. Furthermore, other exposures to an unidentified source case may have occurred previously.

Measles EpiX Posting:

Brief Summary of Report:

A preschool child experienced rash onset on April 15 and was confirmed with measles on April 16. During the infectious period the child visited multiple facilities, including a clinic and ED.

Description:

A preschool child, with classic symptoms of measles (fever, cough, coryza, conjunctivitis, and a rash) was confirmed IgM positive (at UHL, Iowa's public health laboratory) on the morning of April 16, 2009. Rash onset occurred on April 15. The child has been isolated since clinical diagnosis. During the infectious period, the child visited fast food restaurants, a clinic and emergency department (ED), grocery stores, super stores, long term care facilities, churches, and a multitude of Easter egg hunts. Vaccine and immunoglobulin clinics are taking place in Spencer, Iowa, during April 16-17. The child has had no recent travel history to other states and has not been recently exposed to visitors from other states, thus the

source of infection is unknown. State Health Alert Network messages have been sent across Iowa and to neighboring states.

Type of Cases: Human

Number of Cases: 1

Exposed: 100's?

Total Ill or Injured: 1

Hospitalized: 0

Deaths: 0

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What is rubella?

Rubella is a viral infection that is most serious in pregnant females because it can harm their unborn baby. It is also called German measles or 3-day measles.

Who can get rubella?

Rubella can affect anyone who has not had rubella or who has not been immunized against it.

How is rubella spread?

Rubella is spread through the air by coughing, sneezing or talking.

What are the signs and symptoms of rubella?

In children the disease usually begins with a rash. The rash appears on the face and neck. The rash lasts about 2-3 days. In older children and adults there may be a low-grade fever, swollen glands in the back of the neck and an upper respiratory infection (URI) before the rash begins.

How soon do symptoms appear after exposure?

Usually 12-23 days after the person is exposed to the rubella virus.

How can a doctor confirm that an illness is rubella?

Confirmation is through a blood test.

When and for how long is a person able to spread rubella?

Rubella can be spread from about a week before the rash starts until about a week after. Infants with CRS can spread virus for months after birth.

What are the complications associated with rubella?

For most children and adults rubella is relatively mild. However, if a woman is in her 1st trimester of pregnancy catches the disease her baby has up to a 90% chance of being born deaf, blind, mentally retarded, with heart defects or stillborn. These conditions are referred to as Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS).

Is there a treatment for rubella?

There is no specific treatment for rubella.

Can rubella be prevented?

Yes. Rubella vaccine given in combination with Measles and Mumps (called MMR vaccine) is recommended for all children at 12-15 months of age and at 4-6 years of age. The two doses of vaccine normally provide life long immunity.

Does a past infection with rubella make a person immune for life?

Yes

What is measles?

Measles is a disease caused by measles virus and sometimes referred to as "hard", "red" or "10-day measles".

Who can get measles?

Measles virus can infect any person of any age who has not previously had the disease or measles vaccine.

How is measles spread?

Airborne droplets, from coughing or sneezing, spread the virus. It spreads easily and rapidly.

How soon do symptoms appear after exposure?

It takes from 8-12 days for the cold-like symptoms to appear and 14 days for the rash.

What are the signs and symptoms of measles?

The disease begins with cold-like signs and symptoms including a cough, runny nose, high temperature and red watery eyes. By the second day after onset, a red blotchy rash appears at the hairline and spreads down the body to the arms and legs. The rash disappears in the same order of appearance (head to foot) in about 5-6 days.

How can parents be sure that their child's illness is measles?

The only sure way to determine if an illness is indeed measles is through a blood test.

When and for how long is a person able to spread measles?

Measles can be spread from one day before the onset of cold-like symptoms, through the fourth day of the rash.

What are the complications associated with measles?

Among children with measles, about 10% develop ear infections, about 5% develop pneumonia, about 0.1% (1 per 1000 cases) develop encephalitis (inflammation of the brain that can result in deafness or mental retardation), and about 0.1% to 0.2% (1 to 2 per 1000 cases) die from it.

Is there a treatment for measles?

There is no specific treatment for measles.

Can measles be prevented?

Yes. Measles vaccine (usually given in combination with rubella and mumps vaccine, called measles-mumps-rubella or MMR vaccine) is recommended for all children at 12-15 months of age and again at 4-6 years of age. The 2-doses of vaccine normally provide life long immunity.

Does a past infection with measles make a person immune for life?

Yes