



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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February 9, 2018

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Health Department Confirms Measles Case in County Resident Urges Anyone with Symptoms to Contact Health Care Provider

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) has confirmed the diagnosis of measles in an Allegheny County resident. As that resident was mobile and potentially exposed others, the Health Department is urging anyone who is susceptible to measles, may have been in the same location during the indicated times, and become ill with symptoms of measles between now and February 15 to contact their primary care provider immediately.

The resident diagnosed with measles was potentially contagious from January 17-25, 2018. During that time, the individual was on the Carnegie Mellon University campus and also rode Port Authority of Allegheny County buses between Oakland and Squirrel Hill multiple times during that time frame. While specific bus routes or time of day are not known, it appears the individual rode on the 61A, 61B, 61C or 61D routes. ACHD has been working closely with both Carnegie Mellon University and the Port Authority so they may also notify their respective constituencies.

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus. Symptoms begin 7 to 21 days after exposure and include a runny nose, red and watery eyes, cough and a high fever. After four days, a raised, red rash begins on the face and spreads downward to neck, trunk and extremities. The rash usually lasts four to seven days. The last day the Health Department expects symptoms to appear is February 15. While the potential for additional cases is limited, and there are no additional cases of measles in Allegheny County at this time, people should be aware of the risk.

“If you believe you have symptoms of measles, and have been in the locations noted above, please contact your primary care provider immediately to notify them that you may have been exposed,” said ACHD Director Dr. Karen Hacker. “Do not go directly to the office, urgent care center or emergency room, as this may expose other persons. Pregnant women should contact their doctor about their immune status. Health care providers who suspect measles should call the Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (2243) for consultation and to arrange testing.”

While most people are not at risk because they have been immunized or have had measles, the following groups of individuals are susceptible to becoming infected with measles:

- Anyone born since 1957 who has not received two doses of effective measles vaccine known as MMR, which includes infants too young to have been immunized; persons who were vaccinated with an inactivated vaccine (used from 1963 through 1967) and have not been re-vaccinated; and those who refused vaccination.
- Persons whose immune systems are compromised due to disease or medication.

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 in the air and 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 measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is given to toddlers when they are 12 to 15 months of age, and a second MMR vaccine 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 susceptible to the virus.

Adults born during or after 1957 who have not had two doses of vaccine or documented disease should be vaccinated with one dose of MMR vaccine. The MMR vaccine also can help prevent infection if it is given within three days of exposure.

The Health Department recommends that any person who is due for measles vaccination schedule an appointment to receive it from their medical provider. The vaccine is also available at the Health Department's immunization clinic, located at 425 First Avenue, Fourth Floor, in downtown Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA 15219 (entrance is on Cherry Way). There is no risk in getting an additional dose of the MMR vaccine for individuals who may have already received it.

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