4 April 2014

Possible exposure to measles at Menai High School on 31 March & 1 April 2014

The Public Health Unit has been notified that a person at Menai High School has been confirmed as having measles. The person was at the school on 31 March & 1 April 2014 and was infectious at the time.

For staff and students who were at the school on these dates, it is possible you may have been exposed.

Those most at risk from this exposure are people who have not had measles in the past, and have not had two doses of measles vaccine (usually adults born during or since 1966). Immunisation with MMR vaccine is now routinely given at 12 months with a second dose at 4 years providing 99% protection from infection, so young people are likely to be protected if they completed the recommended routine childhood immunisation schedule.

Most students will have been routinely immunised against measles at 12 months and 4 years of age and will not require further vaccination.

To check your child’s vaccination status refer to your ‘Blue Book’ or for children born after January 1996, the Immunisation Record provided by the Australian Immunisation Register. You can also contact the Register on 1800 653 809 or visit a Medicare Office to obtain a copy of your child’s immunisation records.

In the past, measles was a very common childhood viral infection. With immunisation, this infection has been rare and has usually occurred in adults born during or after 1966. At any age, serious complications such as middle ear infection, pneumonia and encephalitis (brain infection) can occasionally occur. On rare occasions measles can be life threatening.

The incubation period for measles is 7 – 18 days; so if you are not immune, it is possible you may develop symptoms anytime from approximately 7 April – 19 April 2014.

If you develop symptoms of measles (fever, tiredness, runny nose, cough and red eyes which last a few days before a blotchy rash appears):
- see a doctor
  Please call ahead to alert your doctor about the possibility of measles before visiting and take this letter along. Do not sit in a waiting room with others;
- your doctor should ring the Public Health Unit while you are with them to discuss testing
- you should stay at home until the end of the infectious period – measles is infectious from up to 5 days before and 4 days after the rash first develops

For information on measles and how to prevent it, refer to the attached NSW Health Measles fact sheet, also found at www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles_Factsheet.aspx

Should you require more information, please do not hesitate to call the Public Health Unit on 9382 8333 and ask for a member of the Infectious Diseases Team.

Yours sincerely

Professor Mark J Ferson MPH MD FRACP FAFPHM
Director and Public Health Officer