



Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Division of Disease Control

DONALD F. SCHWARZ, MD, MPH
Deputy Mayor, Health & Opportunity
Health Commissioner

NAN FEYLER, JD, MPH
Chief of Staff

CAROLINE C. JOHNSON, MD
Director, Division of Disease Control

Health Alert
Confirmed Case of Measles in University Student, Philadelphia
February 20, 2009

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) Division of Disease Control is investigating a case of measles in a 26-year-old Indian national who is a graduate student at a university in Philadelphia. The person had no immunity to measles. He had recently traveled extensively throughout India, returning to Philadelphia on February 9, 2009. The onset of prodromal symptoms was February 11, 2009; rash onset was February 16, 2009. PDPH is working closely with the university to identify exposed individuals and provide post-exposure vaccine or immune globulin, if appropriate.

During the contagious period, the person attended a conference in a Center City hotel and visited several restaurants in Philadelphia both on and off the university campus. In light of these possible community exposures, PDPH recommends the following:

- Healthcare professionals should consider the diagnosis of measles in susceptible individuals who present with fever, rash, and cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis. Given the global resurgence of measles, suspicion should be especially high for individuals who report recent international travel, or contact with persons who have traveled internationally.
- Immigrants, international travelers and others who have not received vaccines in the United States as part of the pediatric immunization schedule may be susceptible to measles. In general, persons are considered immune to measles if they have had 2 doses of measles-containing vaccine (generally given as measles, mumps, and rubella or MMR vaccine) after the age of 12 months and at least one month apart; or if they have had a history of measles; or if they were born before 1957.
- Obtain urine and nasopharyngeal specimens for viral diagnosis (culture, PCR) from suspect cases as early as possible in the course of illness. Serum for measles IgM should be collected after the onset of rash. PDPH can facilitate specimen transport to the Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories for diagnostic testing.
- To prevent transmission of measles in healthcare settings, staff should be vigilant about recognizing measles-compatible rash illness in patients. Such patients should be removed from waiting areas to isolation rooms as quickly as possible. Patients should be asked to wear a surgical mask (if tolerated) for source containment, airborne infection-control precautions should be followed stringently, and patients should be placed in a negative air-pressure room as soon as possible. If a negative air-pressure room is not available, the patient should be placed in a room with the door closed.
- Healthcare personnel place themselves and their patients at risk if they are not protected against measles. Healthcare personnel should have documented evidence of measles immunity readily available at their work location.

Report all suspected measles cases immediately to the Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6748, so that public health investigation and disease control measures can be initiated promptly. After normal business hours and on weekends, call 215-686-1776 and ask for the person on-call for the Division.