

Managing Measles in Primary Care

There is now community spread of measles in Auckland requiring a revised outbreak management process. This Advisory contains important information about the process and how primary care can help with the outbreak response.

1. Managing SUSPECTED measles cases

Isolate – Test - Notify - Advise - Isolate -Immunise

Isolate any suspected cases in your practice

Set up a process to screen patients for suspected measles when they phone, encourage them to ring from their car when they arrive, and keep them isolated from others in your clinic. Please use a separate area for assessing suspected cases.

There is signage for the door [*'STOP - do you think you have measles?'*](#)

Test for suspected measles with urgent PCR

- Take a nasopharyngeal or throat swab for measles PCR if within 3 days of rash onset. After day three of the rash, take a PCR swab and take blood for measles serology (don't send potentially infectious patients to a lab).
- Please courier urgent samples to the laboratory and mark 'Urgent for Public Health.' Consider a taxi if you have a high index of suspicion.

Notify on suspicion

- Notify ARPHS immediately of all suspect cases. Do not wait for investigations to be completed.
- **To notify ARPHS, call 09 623 4600 (24-hour phone line) or complete and fax the [measles notification form](#) to fax 09 6307431 (working hours only – 8am to 5pm).**
- People meet **clinical criteria for measles** if they have:
 - fever (at least 38°C if measured); **and**
 - maculopapular rash; **and**
 - one or more of the following: cough, coryza, conjunctivitis or Koplik's spots.

Provide advice to suspected cases

- Suspected cases should be told to stay home, and away from non-immune people (including visitors). **Isolation is required until the end of day 4** (day 0 is when the rash appears)
- Advise suspected cases that should they be confirmed as having measles, ARPHS will be in contact with them.
- **Provide fact sheets on measles from the ARPHS website: www.arphs.health.nz.** There is specific information for people with measles, for close contacts, those at high risk of complications, and managers of high risk organisations like early learning services. A range of translations (e.g. Māori, Tongan, Samoan) are available.

2. Managing CONFIRMED measles cases

Provide further advice to confirmed cases

- Ask the case to inform their workplace or university.
- Case in early childhood education service or school – parent of case to inform education service or school that ARPHS will be in contact with them.
- Exposed contacts from your clinic (if the case was NOT isolated during their visit) – please provide contact details promptly to ARPHS when requested especially if exposed contact is less than 15 months, pregnant or immunocompromised.
- ARPHS will follow up directly with contacts at high risk of complications and send information to low risk exposed contacts via text, email or letter.

Prepare for requests relating to MMR

- You may have increased calls from patients about vaccination histories and requests for MMR vaccination.

3. Promote vaccination

- Increasing population level measles immunity is a mainstay for controlling the measles outbreak. One MMR vaccination provides long-lasting measles immunity for 95 per cent of people. Primary care has a vital role in this aspect of the measles response.
- Please continue the childhood MMR schedule at 15 months and 4 years.
- Where possible, offer catch up MMR vaccinations. The first priority is people who have never had an MMR vaccination: please provide them with MMR1. You may want to consider active recall for MMR1 in this population.

4. In summary – ARPHS' new process for managing measles in Auckland

ARPHS will continue to -

- Receive notifications and confirm cases.
- Follow up and monitor **confirmed cases, household contacts and contacts at high risk of complications.**
- Manage public health action in high risk settings such as an early childhood centre.

ARPHS will not directly follow up individual contacts with a lower risk of complications such as the majority of individuals in waiting rooms, workplaces and tertiary institutions. These contacts will be sent information only. If they are not immune or are unsure of their immune status, they will be asked to stay home for a defined period, to watch for symptoms of measles and to contact their General Practitioner should they become unwell.

For more information, contact ARPHS on 09 6234600 or fax 09 6234633, or visit www.arphs.health.nz