



Measles confirmed in Lee County children

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has received serological confirmation of five cases of measles in Lee County. All five children attend a day care center in the Auburn-Opelika area and are under 12 months of age. The child with the first case evidently was exposed during an international trip in September and was the probable source of exposure for the other cases.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson said, "In response to this cluster, the health department has conducted extensive interviews to identify other contacts to these cases so they can be alerted about their possibility of developing measles and be targeted for intervention."

Measles, also known as rubeola, red measles or 10-day measles, is a highly contagious viral disease. The disease is spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people or by airborne transmission. Simply being in the same room with someone who has measles can be sufficient to become infected. Transmission has previously been documented in health care settings up to two hours after the patient has left the waiting room.

Measles vaccine is normally administered on or after the first birthday. The department is conducting case investigations to identify and contact individuals or parents of individuals who had contact with the infected children. The department will begin offering vaccine to those susceptible individuals who came in contact with them.

Symptoms of measles generally appear in two stages about 10 to 12 days following exposure. In the first stage the individual may have the cold-like symptoms of a runny nose, cough and a fever over 101 degrees F. The eyes may become reddened and sensitive to light, and Koplik spots (little white spots) may also appear inside the cheeks. The second stage begins on the third to seventh day after the cold-like symptoms appear and consists of a temperature of 103 to 105 degrees F. and a red, blotchy rash that lasts five to six days. The rash usually begins on the face and then spreads over the entire body. A person is able to transmit measles to others for three to five days prior to and four days after the rash's onset.

Should these types of symptoms occur in a family member, please call your doctor to find out when your family member can be seen. Please let your doctor know what the symptoms are so the doctor can make suitable arrangements so the disease will not be spread as a result of the office visit. For more information about measles call 1-800-469-4599 or your local county health department.

(FOR LEE COUNTY CALL 745-5765.)

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Frequently Asked Questions About Measles

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection marked by fever, cough, conjunctivitis, cold symptoms and a red rash. Complications include middle ear infection, pneumonia and swelling of the tissue which covers the brain (encephalitis).

What are the symptoms?

Begins with runny nose, cough, red or watery eyes and fever. The rash is usually red and blotchy and typically begins 2 to 4 days after the cold-like symptoms. It usually begins on the face and spreads downward. The eyes may be sensitive to light.

How is it spread?

Through the air by coughing and sneezing. Measles is one of the most easily spread diseases. For example, if a person with measles is in a room and coughs, susceptible people who come into that room as much as two hours later are at risk of being infected.

How long after being infected does a person become sick?

Cold symptoms, cough and fever usually begin 8 to 12 days after being infected. The rash usually begins 14 days after being infected.

When can someone with measles spread it to others?

Beginning 3 to 5 days before the rash appears until 4 days after the rash appears.

How can the spread of measles be prevented or controlled?

- **Routine vaccination recommendation.** Children should receive their first dose of measles vaccine in the form of Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine between 12 and 15 months of age. The second (final) dose should be received at 4 to 6 years of age. Those who have not received the second dose should receive it no later than age 11 to 12.
- **Vaccination in an outbreak situation.** Children 6 to 12 months of age should be given one dose of MMR vaccine. They will need to be reimmunized after 12 months of age.
- **Isolation of persons with measles.** People with measles should be isolated at home for 4 days after appearance of the rash.
- **Prevention of measles after being exposed.** Unprotected people who get exposed may be protected if they receive measles vaccine within 72 hours of the exposure.
- **Personal hygiene.** Cover mouth and nose with disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing. Practice frequent and thorough hand washing.

How is measles treated?

There is no specific treatment. Only aspirin-free products should be used as comfort measures for measles and other childhood illnesses

What should a person do if he or she thinks they might have measles? *SEE A DOCTOR!*

Immediately see a doctor. Call the doctor first to make arrangements and tell him or her that you suspect measles so that other people will not be exposed.