



MEDIA RELEASE:

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Measles update for Nelson, Marlborough and Tasman regions

The Nelson Marlborough Public Health Service confirms that there has been a second confirmed case of measles in Nelson.

The new case is related to the first; they were one of the four people in isolation who had been in contact with the first case and who had been determined to be non-immune to measles.

The other three people have since come out of isolation having not developed any symptoms.

One person who was in contact with the new confirmed case is now in isolation.

Medical Officer of Health Dr Andrew Lindsay says that while a second case has been confirmed, the school at which the first case attends can be commended for its efforts and co-operation with the Nelson Marlborough Health Public Health Service's advice.

"Their pro-activity and co-operation during the critical isolation phase will have helped reduce the spread of this serious disease," Dr Lindsay says.

Dr Lindsay says that the one person who is now in isolation will be required to stay in isolation for 14 days to be sure they do not develop the illness.

"During this time we will stay in touch with this person to check that they aren't developing any measles symptoms, and to make sure that they are adequately supported during what can be quite a stressful time," Dr Lindsay says.

Regional GPs are on alert to possible cases presenting and will assess and notify the Public Health Service if appropriate.

Nelson Marlborough Health is also linked in to a national measles management co-ordination effort led by the Ministry of Health. A national approach is necessary given that cases have spread beyond Hamilton. The Ministry of Health will also coordinate with the Ministry of Education on advice around Measles in schools.

Dr Lindsay says that the best way to avoid getting measles is to:

1. Make sure you and your children are up to date with the MMR (Measles Mumps Rubella) vaccine. Check with your GP to be sure.
2. Be alert to the early symptoms of measles: It starts with a fever and usually a cough or runny nose, and perhaps sore, red eyes before the rash appears.
3. Stay at home with any symptoms; phone and discuss any symptoms with a GP or practise nurse, rather than putting other people at risk by visiting a GP, after-hours GP or hospital ED unit.

Dr Lindsay says that measles is highly infectious to non-immune people and can spread to others in a waiting room.

He says that people born before 1969, and people who have had two doses of the MMR vaccine are ‘almost certainly’ immune to measles. But please check with your doctor that you have had your two doses of MMR.

If you have definitely had measles in the past you are also immune.

Ends

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