

MEDIA RELEASE:

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Third case of measles confirmed in Nelson

The Nelson Marlborough Public Health Service has confirmed a third case of measles, and this person has been admitted to Nelson Hospital.

Medical Officer of Health Dr Andrew Lindsay says that the new case appears to be unrelated to the first two, and that this indicates that measles is likely to be in the community.

“The best thing for people to do is to make sure you and your children are up to date with the MMR (Measles Mumps Rubella) vaccine. Check with your GP to be sure, and your GP can also give you the best immunisation advice for your circumstances,” Dr Lindsay says.

He says that measles is highly infectious to non-immune people.

“Measles can spread to others in a waiting room. This is why it is important – if you have measles symptoms – to call your GP or Healthline first – before going to your doctor or medical centre.”

“Measles starts with a fever and usually a cough or runny nose, and perhaps sore, red eyes before the rash appears.”

Dr Lindsay says that people born before 1969, and people who have had two doses of the MMR vaccine are “almost certainly” immune to measles. People who have definitely had measles in the past are also immune.

“But, if in doubt, check with your doctor to see if you have had the recommended number of MMR vaccines.”

The Nelson Marlborough Public Health Service is currently tracking people who have come into contact with the new case. These people will be contacted and informed about what they need to do; if they are not immune to measles they will be required to go into isolation for 14 days.

Dr Lindsay says there are currently five people in isolation in Nelson. Three of these people are contacts of the two measles cases still in isolation.

The Public Health Service is currently monitoring those people in isolation to check that they aren't developing any measles symptoms.

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

Nelson Marlborough Health is working with the Ministry of Health and other DHBs to develop a co-ordinated response to the outbreak.

Cases of measles in Nelson, Marlborough and Tasman to date

- This is the third confirmed case. It is the first case to require hospitalisation.
- Five people are currently in isolation

- The first two cases were related; the second case was one of the four people in isolation who had been in contact with the first case. One person is in isolation who came into contact with the first case.
- The other three people who were isolated as a result of their contact with the first case have since been released from isolation having not developed any measles symptoms
- The first case is now recovering and is no longer contagious

How to avoid catching measles

- Make sure you and your children are up to date with the MMR (Measles Mumps Rubella) vaccine. Check with your GP to be sure.
- 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.
- 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.

Ends

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