

Probable Measles Case and Possible Exposures in Blair and Clearfield Counties

DATE:	8/4/2023
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Debra L. Bogen, MD, FAAP, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Probable Measles Case and Possible Exposures in Blair and Clearfield Counties
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a
This transmission is a “Health Advisory” provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.	

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

Summary

- One probable case of measles was recently identified with possible exposures in Blair and Clearfield Counties.
- While this probable measles case was potentially infectious, they visited several locations where potential exposure to the general public may have occurred. The locations and times when residents may have been exposed include:
 - July 23, 2023: Victoria Baptist Church of Moshannon Valley, 614 Grace St., Houtzdale, PA, 16651 (Clearfield County), from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm:
 - July 29, 2023: Med Express, Plank Ave., Altoona, PA (Blair County), from 3.17 pm to 5.45 pm;
 - July 29, 2023: UPMC Altoona, Emergency Department, 620 Howard Ave., Altoona, PA 16601 (Blair County) from 4:04 pm to 6:50 pm;
 - July 29, 2023: Penn Highlands Tyrone Hospital, 187 Hospital Dr., Tyrone, PA 16686 (Blair County), from 5:08 pm to 10:45 pm.
- Med Express, Penn Highlands Tyrone Hospital, and UPMC Altoona are notifying and evaluating patients, visitors, and staff who may have come in contact with the individual.
- Providers should have an increased suspicion for measles in patients who present with a febrile-rash illness and follow the proper recommendations for testing and infection control measures.
- PA DOH also reminds providers to immediately report suspected cases of measles to local public health authorities or to the PA DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

Background

On July 31, 2023, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) became aware of a single person with probable measles. Upon investigation, it was determined that the person with probable measles had visited several locations during the infectious period (i.e., time when measles could have been spread to others). Measles can remain in the air for up to two hours after the ill individual was present. The locations and times below are where there was a possible risk of measles exposure:

- July 23, 2023: Victoria Baptist Church of Moshannon Valley, 614 Grace St., Houtzdale, PA, 16651 (Clearfield County), from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm;
- July 29, 2023: Med Express, Plank Ave., Altoona, PA (Blair County), from 3:17 pm to 5:45 pm;
- July 29, 2023: UPMC Altoona, Emergency Department, 620 Howard Ave., Altoona, PA 16601 (Blair County) from 4:04 pm to 6.50 pm;
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When to suspect measles

Consider measles as a diagnosis in anyone with a [febrile rash](#) illness lasting three days or more, a temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher, and clinically compatible symptoms (cough, coryza and/or conjunctivitis), particularly if the patient was potentially exposed to a case of measles or has recently traveled to an area with an [on-going measles outbreak](#).

Immunocompromised patients may not exhibit rash or may exhibit an atypical rash. The incubation period for measles from exposure to rash onset is usually 14 days (range, 7 to 21 days).

While most people are not at risk because they have been immunized or have had measles, the following groups of individuals are susceptible to becoming infected with measles:

- Anyone born since 1957 who has not received two doses of live measles-containing vaccine (MMR), which would include infants too young to have been immunized; persons who were vaccinated with an inactivated vaccine, which was used from 1963 through 1967, and have not been re-vaccinated; and those who refused vaccination.
- Persons whose immune systems are compromised due to disease or medication.

Measles clinical manifestations & transmission

Measles is an acute viral disease that is spread through airborne transmission of the virus or by contact with items contaminated by throat or nasal secretions. Measles disease is characterized by:

- Fever, cough, runny nose (coryza) and red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis);
- [Koplik's spots](#), which may appear on the buccal mucosa within 2 or 3 days;
- A characteristic [red, blotchy rash](#) that appears on the face then spreads body-wide in days 3 through 7 after symptoms onset;
- Other symptoms may include anorexia, lymphadenopathy and diarrhea (especially in infants).
- Possible complications of measles include otitis media, pneumonia, febrile seizures, and encephalitis.

Infection control consideration for suspected cases of measles

[PA DOH](#) requests that all health care providers maintain a high index of suspicion for measles in persons with a febrile rash illness. Because measles is highly infectious and the virus can remain

airborne up to two hours, providers should take precautions to minimize exposure if one of their patients is suspected of being infected.

- Advise patients who call about a febrile rash illness to minimize exposure to others.
- Should a person with suspected of having measles present for care, place a mask on patient and isolate immediately.
- Arrange for exam in isolated area. The exam room should not be used for at least 2 hours after the person suspected of having measles leaves.
- Consider review of vaccine records or titer reports for your staff now, to ensure that only those with evidence of immunity provide care to a person suspected of having measles.

If you suspect a person has measles, immediately reported the case to PA DOH at 877-724-3258 or your local health department for consultation and to assist with diagnosis (including specimen testing through the PA DOH, tracking of contacts and initiation of control measures.

Measles testing

PA DOH urges providers to obtain the following specimens from patients who are suspected of having measles and provide the onset date of patient's symptoms:

- Throat or nasopharyngeal swab for rRT-PCR testing
 - Send specimen in viral or universal transport media (VTM/UTM)
 - Ship on cold packs
- Urine for rRT-PCR testing
 - Collect minimum of 50 mL in sterile container
 - Ship on cold packs in leak-proof container
- Serum for measles IgM and IgG testing
 - Acute phase serum as soon as possible and convalescent serum 2-3 weeks later
 - Collect minimum of 5 mL of blood in a red-top or serum-separator tube (SST)

Presumptive Evidence of Immunity

People presumed to be immune to measles are those with:

- Written documentation of adequate vaccination:
 - One or more doses of a measles-containing vaccine administered on or after the first birthday for preschool-age children and adults not at high risk
 - Two doses of measles-containing vaccine for school-age children and adults at high risk, including college students, healthcare personnel, and international travelers
- Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Laboratory confirmation of measles
- A birthdate before 1957*

*Healthcare workers need to meet one of the first three bullets to be considered immune.

Who Should Be Vaccinated?

- All children over one year of age who have not yet been vaccinated.
 - Children over 13 months of age who received a first dose of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine at least 4 weeks ago who are at risk of measles exposure may receive a second dose
- Children between 6 months and 1 year of age who will be traveling internationally or visiting a community with an on-going measles outbreak. (This dose will not count toward the primary

series and two additional doses after one year of age will still be required.)

- Adults who have not yet been vaccinated
- Adults who will be traveling internationally or visiting a community with an on-going measles outbreak who have not previously received two doses of MMR vaccine

Post Exposure Prophylaxis for People with Known Exposure to a Measles Case

- MMR vaccine given to nonimmune individuals within 72 hours of exposure can prevent measles disease:
 - For adults and children without contraindications who have not previously received two doses of MMR if at least one month has elapsed since the most recent dose
 - For infants between 6 and 11 months of age, a dose of MMR vaccine can be given but will not count as part of the primary series.
- Immune globulin (0.50 mL/kg, max 15 mL) given within 6 days of exposure for [high risk](#) and /or nonimmune exposed individuals can reduce the likelihood of measles disease and complications.

For questions, please call your local health department or DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

PA DOH also reminds providers to immediately report suspected cases of measles to local public health authorities or to PA DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

Individuals interested in receiving future PA-HANs can register at HAN Notification Registration (mir3.com)

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of August 4, 2023, but may be modified in the future.
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