

### Media statement

6 September 2019

#### Public Health alert issued for measles – Sunshine Coast

A local Sunshine Coast person has been diagnosed with measles following an overseas trip. The patient has been diagnosed after presenting to Sunshine Coast University Hospital on Wednesday, 4 September.

The adult had likely acquired the virus during a recent overseas trip to New Zealand. Staff from the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service's Infection Management Service and Public Health Unit are in the process of tracing and contacting staff, patients and members of the community who may have come in contact with the patient. People who were considered to be potentially exposed will be individually contacted.

Dr Rosie Muller, Director Sunshine Coast Public Health Unit said this was an opportune time to remind people of the importance of being immunised against the measles virus.

The patient was unknowingly infectious while visiting the following locations:

- Caloundra Lighthouse Rugby Union Club, Arthur Street Caloundra on:
  - Saturday 31 August between 11.30-2.30pm
- Poinciana Place Shopping Centre, Poinciana Avenue Tewantin on;
  - Sunday 1 September between 7:00am-4.30pm
  - Monday 2 September between 6.30am-9.30am.

Dr Rosie Muller said people who were in these areas at the same time should seek medical advice if they develop measles symptoms.

"Measles is one of the most infectious of all communicable diseases and is spread by tiny droplets generated through coughing and sneezing," Dr Muller said.

"Early symptoms include fever, runny nose, lethargy and sore, red eyes. This is followed a few days later by a blotchy red rash, which often starts on the face before becoming widespread.

"Symptoms typically start between 10 and 18 days after infection so anyone who develops symptoms within the next couple of weeks should contact their family doctor for advice.

"It's very important to call the medical practice first to say you could have measles, so that staff can take precautions to avoid spreading the disease to others.

"Measles should not be regarded as a simple mild disease. Severe complications can occur and are more common in people with a chronic illness and very young children."

# Sunshine Coast

## Hospital and Health Service

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Queensland Health recommends anyone born during or since 1966, who has not had two documented doses of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine or had proven measles, should visit their local family doctor to get vaccinated for measles. For anyone who is unsure whether they have had two doses, it is safe to have another. The vaccine is free for anyone who requires it.

There are a large number of ongoing international measles outbreaks in New Zealand, Asia, Europe and America. Anyone intending to travel overseas should ensure they are up to date with their measles vaccination. Infants from the age of six months who are travelling overseas are able to be vaccinated against measles.

Further information on measles is available on the Queensland Health website, at: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/> or by calling 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

A fact sheet for the public about measles is available: <http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/217/91/measles>

**ENDS**

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