4 February 2020

Measles alert for Maroochydore

Queensland Health is responding to a new notification of measles in an adolescent boy, who spent time at Sunshine Plaza, Maroochydore while he was unknowingly infectious.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s Public Health Unit Director, Dr Rosie Muller, said that it is most likely the boy was exposed to measles in Asia, where he had been travelling, and there is known ongoing measles activity. The boy was a co-traveller with the Sunshine Coast resident who had been confirmed to have measles last week.

The boy was unknowingly infectious while visiting Sunshine Plaza on 23 January between 1-4 pm.

“We urge anyone who was at this location during this time to ensure they are protected against measles and to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms over the next week,” Dr Muller said.

Measles is one of the most infectious of all communicable diseases and is spread by tiny droplets through coughing and sneezing.

The initial symptoms are fever, lethargy, runny nose, moist cough and sore and red eyes, followed a few days later by a blotchy red rash. The rash starts on the face then becomes widespread. Symptoms usually start around 10 days after infection but sometimes later.

“If you are concerned about your symptoms and plan to visit your General Practitioner (GP) it is very important to call the medical practice first to say you could have measles, so that staff have precautions in place when you arrive to avoid spreading the disease to others.

“This is a reminder that everyone should take the opportunity to make sure they are vaccinated against measles.”

“If you are planning overseas travel it is important to ensure that you are protected against measles before travelling.”

You are generally considered to be immune to measles if:
- You were born before 1966
- You have had two documented doses of a measles containing vaccine (such as MMR)
- You have measles immunity proven on blood testing
- You have had laboratory-confirmed measles disease.

Anyone who does not meet the above criteria is encouraged to talk to their GP regarding immunisation. The measles vaccine is provided free for any person born during or since
1966. Infants from the age of six months who are travelling 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 your GP or 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

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