



MLS: Laboratory Update

Measles Outbreak in Hennepin County

March 16, 2011

Purpose of this Message:

To make you aware of three cases of measles that have been confirmed in Hennepin County in the past two weeks, and to inform about acceptable specimen types for testing at MDH-PHL.

Background

Three cases of measles have been confirmed in Hennepin County in the past two weeks. The cases are ages 9 months, 2 years, and 4 years, respectively. The healthcare community was alerted on March 4 to the initial case in the 9-month-old. The additional two cases were confirmed late Friday, March 11. All three cases are laboratory confirmed by measles IgM serology and/or positive PCR. One case is unvaccinated, one case is too young for MMR vaccine, and one case's vaccination history is unknown.

These three cases have no known epidemiologic link to each other, and no known source of infection; therefore, additional cases may have occurred. All three reside in high density housing. The investigation by Hennepin County Public Health is ongoing.

MDH Specimen Criteria

Health care providers, particularly in Hennepin County, who have a high index of suspicion for measles should be directed to obtain specimens for serology (serum), culture (throat swab, nasal wash, and urine) and PCR (throat swab, urine) and to promptly report suspected measles cases to MDH at 1-877-676-5414 (toll-free) or 651-201-5414, and then send the specimens to MDH-PHL.

Additional Information

For the three identified cases, rash onsets occurred on February 26, March 1, and March 9, 2011. The incubation period of measles is generally 14 days from exposure to the onset of rash (range typically is seven to 18 days, and rarely as long as 21 days); therefore, secondary cases in Minnesota would be expected to have onset between March 1 and April 3, 2011.

Measles is characterized by:

- A generalized rash, AND
- Fever, AND
- Cough, coryza (nasal congestion), OR conjunctivitis

Persons known to have been exposed in community or health care settings have been notified, and immune globulin was offered to unvaccinated infants and susceptible pregnant women within six days of exposure to prevent measles in those at highest risk. Additional targeted community notifications will occur through community organizations and communications venues.

Measles fact sheet for health professionals:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/measles/hcp/index.html>

Measles fact sheet for general public:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/measles/basics.html>

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This is an update from the Minnesota Department of Health – Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) and the Minnesota Laboratory System (MLS). This message is being sent to MLS laboratory contacts serving Minnesota residents. You are not required to reply to this message.

****Please forward this to all appropriate personnel within your institution and Health System****

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