



Dear Colleague,

Re: Measles clusters in England

I am writing to alert you about the current measles activity in England. Since the beginning of February 2016, 196 cases of measles have been confirmed predominantly across London, with cases also confirmed in the East of England (11), the South (33), the North West (2), Yorkshire and Humber (1) and East Midlands (1). Initially cases were mostly unimmunised adolescents and adults (aged 13-40 years), however we are now seeing cases across all age groups. Many of the cases have presented to walk-in centres and A&E departments and particularly amongst adult cases, delays in diagnosis have resulted in a lack of infection control measures and the need to undertake significant contact tracing in hospital settings including exclusion of non-immune healthcare staff. Furthermore, since 1 February 2016, there have been 12 cases confirmed amongst healthcare workers which have added to this resource demand.

Two doses of MMR vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent transmission of measles. In order to prevent transmission to high risk patients especially the immunosuppressed, in healthcare settings, it is essential that all staff working with patients are fully immunised with two documented doses of MMR (or 2 doses of measles and rubella containing vaccines), or have positive antibody tests for measles and rubella, according to national guidance. Serological testing is not required post vaccination. Contact tracing and prophylaxis after an exposure is expensive and time consuming. We would therefore urge occupational health teams to ensure assessments for all healthcare workers are undertaken according to national guidelines. For more information follow the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisation-of-healthcare-and-laboratory-staff-the-green-book-chapter-12>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-the-green-book-chapter-21>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-and-social-care-act-2008-code-of-practice-on-the-prevention-and-control-of-infections-and-related-guidance>

Healthcare workers exposed to known or suspected measles whose status is unknown can be urgently tested and those who are measles IgG positive may remain at work (if symptom-free). Susceptible health care workers should receive one dose of MMR and be excluded from work from day five after exposure. The healthcare worker can return to work 21 days after the final exposure. Healthcare workers who become ill with symptoms or rash should be urgently investigated and excluded from all work until four full days after onset of the rash. Any suspected cases in healthcare workers need to have an oral fluid test arranged and should be notified to the local health protection team.

Yours sincerely

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