

22 January 2019

Be alert for measles symptoms

South Western Sydney Local Health District is urging people to watch for measles symptoms after a man arrived from overseas with the disease and visited the area.

This latest case brings the total number of people infectious with measles to three in the District and 11 in the state since the beginning of 2020.

While infectious, the man visited the Mount Annan Marketplace, including the Ultra Care Medical Centre and pharmacy, between 1pm and 3pm on Monday 20 January.

SWSLHD Public Health Unit's Director Dr Naru Pal said while these locations do not pose any ongoing risk to the public, people who were in the same place at the same time as the man should look out for symptoms until 7 February 2020 as symptoms could take up to 18 days to develop.

"Our Public Health Unit is working with the Ultra Care Medical Centre to directly contact patients who may have been in contact with the man to offer information and preventive treatment, if required," Dr Pal said.

"Symptoms to watch out for include fever, sore eyes, runny nose and a cough followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash that spreads from the head to the rest of the body."

Measles is highly contagious and is spread in the air through coughing or sneezing by someone who is unwell with the disease.

"People with measles symptoms should stay home from work or school to avoid exposing others to the disease, particularly vulnerable people, such as infants and those who are pregnant or immunocompromised," Dr Pal said.

"Anyone seeking medical attention for possible symptoms should call their doctor before attending so that arrangements can be made to minimise the risk of the infection spreading."

NSW Health provides the safe and highly effective measles-mumps-rubella vaccine for free to anyone born during or after 1966 who hasn't had two doses.

If you are unsure whether you have had two doses, it is quite safe to have another.

"It's important to be fully vaccinated, not only to protect yourself, but also to protect vulnerable people that you may unknowingly spread the virus to, such as babies."

For young children, the measles vaccine is recommended at 12 months and again at 18 months of age.

SWSLHD is urging people travelling overseas to ensure they are fully vaccinated before heading off.

Protecting children from potentially deadly diseases is a key priority for the NSW Government, which has invested approximately \$130 million in the 2019-20 Immunisation Program budget, including Commonwealth and state vaccines.

For more information on measles, visit:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles_Factsheet.aspx

If you are concerned you may be at risk of measles, contact SWS LHD public health unit on **1300 066 055**