



Measles Health Alert

February 2010

Measles cases continue to be identified in California residents who are returning international travelers. Measles is highly contagious, and rates of vaccine personal belief exceptions are relatively high in some areas of Monterey County. Please protect patients, visitors, and staff!



KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MEASLES SYMPTOMS

Suspect measles in patients with:

- Fever and rash.
- History of international travel or contact with international visitors in the prior 3 weeks.

The course of measles is usually:

1. Onset of a mild to moderate fever accompanied by cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.
2. Two to three days later Koplik's spots (tiny blue/white spots on the bright red background of the buccal mucosa) may appear.
3. The fever spikes, often as high as 104-105°F, at this time.
4. Concurrent with the fever spikes a red blotchy maculopapular rash appears, usually first on the face, along the hairline, and behind the ears. This slightly itchy rash rapidly spreads downward to the chest and back and, finally, to the thighs and feet.
5. In approximately one week, the rash fades in the same sequence that it appeared.



ACT IMMEDIATELY IF YOU SUSPECT MEASLES

- Implement airborne infection control precautions immediately. Mask and isolate the patient. Use a negative pressure room if available.
- **Call the Monterey County Health Department immediately (831-755-4521).**
- Permit only staff immune to measles to be near the patient.
- Do not use any regular exam room for at least 2 hours after a suspected measles patient has left the room.
- Expedite measles serologic testing (both IgM and IgG) through the Monterey County Public Health Laboratory (831-755-4516). **Use of commercial labs may delay diagnosis.**
- Do *not* refer suspect measles patients to other locations for clinical evaluation or laboratory testing unless appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at those locations.



ENCOURAGE YOUR PATIENTS TO GET VACCINATED

Children should get 2 doses of MMR vaccine: the first at 12-15 months of age and the second at 4-6 years of age.

Some adults should also get MMR vaccine. Generally, anyone 18 years of age or older who was born after 1956 should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine unless they are certain they had the diseases. Two doses are recommended for healthcare workers, students, educators, and international travelers.