



**COUNTY OF ORANGE
HEALTH CARE AGENCY**

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Measles Outbreak in Orange County

Orange County has had 21 cases of measles diagnosed in 2014. This outbreak is one of the largest in the country in recent years. As of March 26, 36 cases have occurred statewide, though other counties have seen case counts taper off recently. Additional cases are likely to occur in Orange County in the near future.

One case in this Orange County outbreak had recent overseas travel, but all other cases occurred in persons without a history of travel. The most recent cases have been in family members and healthcare workers exposed to known cases.

Providers should consider the diagnosis of measles in patients with an appropriate clinical presentation, particularly in those with a history of international travel or contact with a known measles case. Measles symptoms usually begin 10-12 days (up to 21 days) after exposure with a prodrome of fever as high as 105°F (40.5°C), malaise, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis. Two to four days following onset of the prodrome, a maculopapular rash develops. The rash usually begins around the ears and hairline and then spreads down to cover the face, trunk, arms, and legs.

Five of the 21 cases have occurred in children under 18, none of whom were immunized. Measles vaccination is routinely recommended for all children. The first dose is given at 12-15 months of age, with the second dose usually at age 4-6 years. The second dose may be given any time ≥ 28 days after the first dose.

Five cases occurred in healthcare workers who cared for patients with measles, several of whom had previously been vaccinated. The MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine is 99% effective, but occurrence of disease in some vaccinated individuals is not surprising, given that measles can spread in an airborne fashion and well over 1000 patients, their family and friends, and medical staff have been exposed to measles in hospitals, emergency departments and clinics where measles cases have been evaluated.

All medical staff should:

- 1) Have two documented doses of MMR or serologic evidence of measles immunity, AND**
- 2) As further protection, wear an N-95 mask if caring for suspected cases of measles EVEN IF IMMUNIZED.**

Medical staff who are exposed to measles and lack evidence of immunity will be excluded by Public Health from work for days 5-21 after exposure.

Any patient suspected of having measles should be masked and immediately moved to a negative pressure room when available. Providers seeing patients in an office or clinic setting should consider options such as arranging to see suspect measles cases after all other patients have left the office, or assessing patients outside of the building to avoid having a potentially infectious patient enter the office.

Providers should notify Orange County Public Health Epidemiology immediately about any suspect cases during office hours by calling 714-834-8180 (or 714-628-7008 after hours). Do not wait for laboratory confirmation before reporting a suspect case. Suspect cases of measles should be tested with a throat (or nasopharyngeal) swab for measles PCR and culture and serum measles IgM; Orange County Public Health can assist with facilitating testing. **PLEASE DO NOT refer patients to Public Health without first discussing with one of our providers.**

DO NOT send potentially infectious suspect measles patients to a reference laboratory for specimen collection.