

May 7, 2010

## Confirmed Measles in Calgary-area prompts vaccination reminder

CALGARY – Alberta Health Services has confirmed a case of measles in the Calgary-area, and is advising of potential exposures.

Individuals who were at the following exact locations within the timeframes specified may have been exposed to the confirmed case of measles:

- Monday, May 3 between 12:45 p.m. and 3 p.m.: Huntington Superstore (NW Calgary)
- Monday, May 3 between 1:45 p.m. and 7 p.m.: CrossIron Mills shopping mall (Balzac)

If these individuals have **not** already had measles disease or have **not** been vaccinated against measles, they may be at risk for developing the disease.

“We are asking all potentially exposed individuals to monitor their health for symptoms of measles disease and if symptoms develop, they are requested to contact HealthLink Alberta immediately, and to avoid all contact with others,” says Dr. Judy MacDonald, AHS Medical Officer of Health (Calgary Zone). “These individuals must continue to monitor for symptoms of measles, up to May 21, 2010.”

Symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose or red eyes, and a red blotchy rash that appears three to seven days after fever starts. The rash typically begins behind the ears and on the face, spreading down to the body, and finally to the arms and legs.

Unlike many other infections, you do not have to have close contact with an infected person to catch measles. In addition to being spread by coughing and sneezing, measles is also spread through air currents. Because it is an airborne disease, it is extremely contagious.

There is no cure for measles, but it can be prevented with vaccination.

“This Calgary case, as well as the ongoing measles outbreak in British Columbia, are reminders of the importance of vaccination,” says Dr. Gerry Predy, AHS Medical Officer of Health. “We need to be proactive to prevent further spread and we strongly encourage parents to ensure their children are up to date with all immunizations.”

The MMR Vaccine, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella, is part of the routine Childhood Immunization Program in Alberta. Children in Alberta typically receive their first dose of MMR Vaccine at 12 months of age and their second dose between the ages of four and six years. Both doses are required to be fully protected.

“Unfortunately, there are pockets of the province where Alberta reports low vaccination rates, and unvaccinated individuals in these areas are at increased risk for certain diseases, including measles,” says Dr. Predy.

To book MMR vaccinations, call your local Community Health Centre or Public Health Office. For more information about measles and MMR vaccine, call HealthLink Alberta at 403.943.LINK (5465) or, outside the local calling area, at 1.866.408.LINK (5465).

See attached backgrounder for additional measles information.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.7 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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