



HEALTH ALERT: New Measles Guidelines

BACKGROUND

From January 1, 2008 until April 25, 2008, 64 measles cases have been reported in the United States. Almost all cases occurred in unvaccinated persons or in persons with an unknown or undocumented vaccine history. Eighteen cases (28%) occurred after exposure in a healthcare setting, including a case in an unvaccinated healthcare worker. **Because several cases have occurred in persons who were vaccinated within 72 hours of exposure, new statewide guidelines related to post-exposure vaccination and exclusion of exposed healthcare workers are being instituted in Massachusetts. In addition, new guidelines related to travel are being implemented.**

HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Birth in the United States before 1957 is NOT acceptable proof of immunity for healthcare workers.

- Healthcare workers born in the United States before 1957 should have at least one dose of measles mumps rubella vaccine (MMR) or serologic proof of immunity prior to exposure.
- Healthcare workers born in or after 1957 must have two doses of MMR given at least 4 weeks apart and beginning at ≥ 12 months of age or serologic proof of immunity prior to exposure.

Note: Physician-diagnosed disease is not acceptable for any group.

Vaccination of susceptible healthcare workers within 72 hours of exposure will NO longer be acceptable to prevent exclusion post-exposure in most situations. Healthcare workers who are not known to be immune at the time of exposure will be excluded from work day 5 after initial exposure through day 21 after last exposure. **It is important to review the immunization status of staff now to prevent exclusions after an exposure.**

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

Given the number of measles cases worldwide and the current outbreak in the United States, it is important that international travelers are protected. The following are new recommendations for travelers:

- **Infants: All infants ≥ 6 months and < 12 months of age traveling abroad should receive one dose of MMR. Please note that infants vaccinated prior to 12 months of age will still need 2 doses of MMR on or after their first birthday.**
- Other age groups:
 - For those born in the United States before 1957, 1 dose of MMR is recommended for those without serologic proof of immunity.
 - All others, including children ≥ 12 months of age, adolescents and adults without serologic proof of immunity, should receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine (separated by ≥ 28 days).

Note: Physician-diagnosed disease is not acceptable for any group.

REPORTING

Massachusetts regulations require the reporting of measles cases to the local board of health where the diagnosis is made. **Providers in Boston must report all suspect or confirmed measles cases to the BPHC Communicable Disease Control Division at (617) 534-5611.** Providers are asked to report suspect or confirmed measles cases immediately as control measures are most effective when applied early. More information is available by contacting the BPHC Communicable Disease Control Division at (617) 534-5611. Reporting forms are available at: http://www.bphc.org/bphc/cdc_providers.asp#reporting.