



JUNE 10, 2008

HEALTH ADVISORY

Rubella Confirmed in a Cass County Resident

On June 6, 2008, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) was notified of a rash illness in an adult male Cass County resident. On Monday, June 9, 2008, laboratory tests confirmed rubella or German measles. The case had recently traveled to India, where he likely contracted the illness. The patient presented with a slight cough and a rash that started June 4, 2008. While infectious, the individual returned from India and flew round trip to and from Minneapolis and Fargo.

Rubella transmission is primarily person to person via large respiratory droplets, but airborne transmission can occur. The incubation period for rubella is generally seven to 21 days. Rubella can be transmitted up to seven days before and seven days after rash onset. Serologic testing for rubella is available from the NDDoH Division of Laboratory Services. Rubella virus also can be isolated from clinical specimens, such as urine, blood or nasopharyngeal secretions.

The clinical case definition for rubella is:

- Acute onset of generalized maculopapular rash.
- A temperature \times 99° F.
- Arthralgia or arthritis, lymphadenopathy, or conjunctivitis.

The NDDoH is in the process of contacting North Dakota residents who were potentially exposed to this rubella case via air travel or identified by the case as a close contact during the patient's infectious period to ensure that they all have a history of rubella vaccination or immunity due to past infection and that no other contacts have developed a rash. Other states have been notified and will contact their residents who may have been affected due to close contact or air travel. Evidence of immunity whether by natural infection or vaccination is especially important in pregnant women or people in close contact with pregnant individuals because of the serious effect the rubella virus can have on an unborn child. Vaccination of susceptible pregnant women should be done post-partum, as rubella-containing vaccines are contraindicated during pregnancy. Rubella is a rare illness in the U.S., and North Dakota has not had a confirmed case of rubella since 1991.

Two doses of rubella-containing vaccine, as a combination MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), separated by at least four weeks, are routinely recommended for all children. Two doses of MMR are required for all children attending grades kindergarten through 12 in North Dakota. Two doses of MMR are also required for people attending colleges in North Dakota. All adults born during or after 1957 should have documentation of at least one dose of MMR or other evidence of rubella immunity. Birth before 1957 is generally considered acceptable evidence of immunity to rubella in the general public. However, individuals who work in health-care facilities who were born before 1957 should receive one dose of MMR to ensure immunity.

Health-care workers born during or after 1957 are required to be vaccinated with two doses of MMR or clinical evidence of past infection.

Proper and timely vaccinations are essential in minimizing or eliminating transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases such as rubella. This situation is an important reminder to all health-care providers that these serious diseases are still endemic in some countries and can be easily imported to the U.S.

Please contact the NDDoH Division of Disease Control at 701.328.2378 or toll-free at 800.472.2180 to report suspected cases of rubella or with any questions or concerns regarding this issue.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- *Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.*
- *Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.*
- *Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.*
- *Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.*

This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, and hospital public information officers.

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You have received this message based upon information contained within our emergency notification database.

If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like to be used, please contact the

North Dakota Department of Health, Health Alert Network program at 701.328.2270.

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