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To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses and Health Professionals
From: Dr Greg Simmons, Chief Advisor, Population Health Directorate
Subject: **MEASLES**

Dear colleague, the recent outbreaks of measles in Otago, Canterbury and Auckland have resulted in changes to policy in relation to MMR immunisation.

Case notification

Please notify any **suspected** measles cases **immediately** to the local Medical Officer of Health and discuss the process for laboratory confirmation of the diagnosis. Early notification is crucial to enable the public health service to identify and manage close contacts of cases.

Contacts of measles cases

For infants aged between 6 and 14 months who are contacts of measles cases, practices should consider giving a dose of MMR if the contact was within the last 72 hours. If the MMR vaccine is given before the first birthday, two further doses of MMR are required to be considered fully immunized (one at 15 months and the second at 4 years).

If the child is aged between 12 and 15 months of age, this dose can be counted as the 15 month episode and they should receive the Hib and pneumococcal vaccines at the same time.

In an outbreak situation the second MMR dose may be given any time after one month from the first. This is particularly important for children aged 4 years or older who have not received any doses as they are beyond the age for the routine second dose.

High-risk contacts (e.g. those significantly immuno-compromised) should receive immunoglobulin. Susceptible (unimmunised) contacts outside the 72 hour window for receiving MMR should also receive immunoglobulin. This can be discussed with the local Medical Officer of Health.

Recall of children for MMR vaccination

You are asked to actively recall children not fully immunised:

- All children aged 15 months to 4 years should receive their first dose of MMR.
- Ensure that those aged 4 to 18 years have received 2 doses of MMR.

Note: This recall will also enable a review of the overall immunisation status especially in light of the current increased incidence of pertussis.

MMR vaccination of Adults

Unimmunised adults (including those where there is no clear documented history of measles immunisation) born after 1969 should receive a dose of MMR vaccine. A second dose may be given any time after one month from the first.

These immunisations are all claimable through the IBS.

Dr Greg Simmons
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