

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Secretary Catherine Torres, M.D.

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Department of Health Investigating a Patient with Travel-related Measles in Otero County
People Urged to Keep Immunizations Up-To-Date

(Santa Fe) -- The New Mexico Department of Health announced today that it is investigating a case of the measles in Otero County. The Department's Scientific Laboratory Division confirmed the case in a 14-month-old male that traveled from Europe who is recovering at home.

Measles is highly contagious and can be transmitted through the air. Early symptoms of measles include red eyes, fever, runny nose and cough. Within a few days following the cough and runny nose, a rash will typically begin on the head and spread down the body. Measles is diagnosed by a combination of symptoms and laboratory testing.

"Our staff is working closely with the family and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify other people who may have been exposed to the disease so we can prevent more cases," said Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres. "Patients with measles serve as a reminder to all of us to keep immunizations current. Immunizations are the best tool we have to protect people from serious and potentially life threatening diseases, like measles."

The Department of Health recommends that anyone traveling outside of the country should check to be sure that they are current on all immunizations including the measles vaccination.

Vaccines are free for any child in New Mexico, regardless of insurance status, under the Vaccines for Children program. Children who have no insurance coverage can get the vaccine at their local public health office. Public health office contact information can be found in the blue pages of the phonebook or online at www.nmhealth.org. Adults needing measles vaccine can contact their medical provider or Nurse Advice New Mexico at 1-877-725-2552.

If you think you may have been exposed to measles or have measles, please call your medical provider first to make arrangements to be seen without exposing other patients to the virus. Infants under one year of age, pregnant women, or immunocompromised individuals who were exposed to the measles patient may need to receive other medications to protect them.

This is the third measles case in New Mexico in 2011. The first case was in a 27-year-old woman from Santa Fe County. Medical providers should report suspect cases of measles to the Department of Health's Epidemiology and Response Division at (505) 827-0006.

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