



Public Health
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Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH ADVISORY March 16, 2011

TO: Physicians and Other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer
Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH, Deputy Health Officer

RE: Immunity to Measles and Other Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

“Health care workers often [mistakenly] think they’re immune. They’ve been working in this setting for a long time, have been around sick people, and [wrongly] think they have natural defenses.”

~ Pascale Wortley, M.D., M.P.H., Chief, Health Services Research and Evaluation Branch, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, CDC.

Local Public Health is working to prevent the further spread of measles in the community. We are encouraging all physicians and other health care providers (including nurse practitioners, physician assistants, medical assistants, nurses, and front and back office staff) to check their vaccination records to ensure they are current on their MMRs as well as vaccines for other vaccine preventable diseases.

Measles

Clark County Public Health recently investigated 2 cases of measles in Clark County. During these investigations, we learned that many health care providers do not know their immune status against measles.

All health care providers who work in medical facilities should have documented immunity against measles. Documented immunity for healthcare providers, including those born before January 1, 1957, includes one of the following:

- Laboratory confirmation of measles immunity (positive IgG result)*, OR
- 2 doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days (the first dose must have been given at age 12 months or older), OR
- Healthcare provider-documented history of measles disease

*Lab results that are “indeterminate” or “equivocal” should be considered non-immune and the individual should receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.

If you are exposed to measles and do not have documented immunity, you will need to follow these guidelines:

- If you **previously had 1 immunization**, you need to get a second immunization as soon as possible (there needs to be at least 28 days between the 2 immunizations) and may return to work after the second vaccination.
- If you were **previously unimmunized** at the time of exposure, you should get the first immunization within 72 hours of exposure; however, whether or not you get the immunization, you are excluded from work and all other public places from day 7 through day 21 days after exposure.

MMR vaccine is contraindicated in pregnant women and immunocompromized individuals.

Pertussis and Influenza

At this time, we also have pertussis and influenza circulating in our community. It is important that health care providers are immunized against influenza and have had one dose of Tdap, a pertussis-containing vaccine. Ensuring that all health care providers and staff who have direct contact with patients are immune to vaccine preventable diseases is an essential step in reducing transmission in the community and at your health care facility.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), all health care providers who work in medical facilities, regardless of age, should have documented immunity against measles, pertussis and influenza.

Additional Information on Immunity for Health Care Providers

For further information on MMR vaccine and all vaccines recommended for health care workers, go to the website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/hcw.htm>

Thank you for your partnership in reducing the transmission of measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases in the community.

If you have questions about healthcare provider immunity to vaccine-preventable diseases or to report notifiable conditions, please call:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207