



DuPage County Health Department

Central Office

111 North County Farm Road

Wheaton, IL 60187-3988

Telephone: (630) 682-7400

www.dupagehealth.org

May 27, 2008

Dear DuPage County School and Child Care Center Parents, Families, and Staff:

There has been a recent increase in measles cases in the U.S. as well as in DuPage County, largely due to cases among under- or unvaccinated persons from the U.S. and abroad. To date this year, four cases of measles in DuPage County have been recently confirmed in school-age children from DuPage County. **Due to the presence of measles in our community, we would like to provide you with some information** to increase awareness, disease recognition and reporting, the importance of prevention through vaccination, and most importantly, **to help control and prevent the spread of measles in the community.**

These cases remind us that it is important to vaccinate children and adults to protect them against measles. According to the Illinois State Board of Education, 98% of students enrolled in public and non-public schools statewide were immunized against measles during the 2007-2008 school year. Illinois School Code allows, however, exemption from immunizations for religious and medical grounds.

Measles is very infectious and is often misdiagnosed, particularly when many physicians have had little experience diagnosing and recognizing measles disease. Measles should be suspected in any patient with a fever, rash, and the three C's (cough, coryza or runny nose, and conjunctivitis or red, runny eyes). **Patients suspected of having measles should contact their physician for further evaluation and testing (prior to visiting to prevent potential spread of disease), and be reported to a local health department as soon as possible, within 24 hours.**

Measles itself is unpleasant, but the complications are dangerous. Six to 20 percent of the people who get the disease will get an ear infection, diarrhea, or even pneumonia and rarely encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Although measles is no longer a prevalent disease in the United States, it is in most countries of the world, including some countries in Europe. Several states, including Arizona, Wisconsin, New York, and Michigan have reported measles cases this year. A provisional total of 95 cases have been reported in the U.S. since January 1, 2008, which is the highest number of cases for the same time period since 2001.

Children and adults should be up to date with their immunizations. If you or anyone in your family does not have documented immunity against measles, please contact your physician for appropriate vaccination(s) and/or immunity testing. Patients may also schedule an immunization appointment at the DuPage County Health Department by calling (630) 682-7400.

All children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine. The measles vaccine is administered as MMR, a combination vaccine that provides protection against measles, mumps, and rubella. The first dose is recommended at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. The MMR vaccine is strongly endorsed by medical and public health experts as safe and effective.

All adults born during or after 1957 should receive at least one dose of vaccine unless they have documented evidence of measles immunity (a blood test or a physician's diagnosis of measles). Two doses are recommended for all international travelers, healthcare personnel, and students at secondary and post-secondary educational facilities. Infants 6-11 months of age should receive one dose prior to travel abroad.

For questions or to report a case of measles, please contact the DuPage County Health Department at 630-682-7400, ext. 7553. More information on measles and measles vaccination is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/default.htm>

Sincerely,

THE DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Rashmi Chugh, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Officer

Maureen McHugh
Executive Director

"We promote health, prevent illness, and provide quality service"