



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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HHSA REPORTS FIRST MEASLES CLUSTER IN CHILDREN SINCE 1991 ***Three San Diego Children Diagnosed with Measles; Vaccination Urged to Prevent Disease***

The County of San Diego HHSA (Health and Human Services Agency) is working with San Diego Cooperative Charter School officials to notify parents and students of a cluster of measles. Two siblings attend the charter school; a third sibling is also infected. The children did not have the measles vaccine. This is the first local cluster of measles in children since 1991. There have been 4 isolated cases of measles in the county since 2003.

A news conference to discuss measles and measles vaccine is scheduled at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Feb. 4, 2008 at HHSA, 1700 Pacific Highway, San Diego.

"This underscores the importance of vaccinating children for measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "We urge parents to make sure their children get the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine for their children, the first at 12 months of age, and the second between ages 4 -6."

The school has called parents and sent letters and e-mails warning them of possible exposure. "We are working with HHSA to educate parents about measles and are providing resources if they have further questions," said Dr. Wendy Ranck-Buhr, school principal.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. The disease is easily spread by coughing, sneezing or close contact with an infected person. Measles causes a rash, high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes, usually lasting for 1-2 weeks. It can be spread from 4 days before the rash appears to 4 days afterwards. The rash begins on the face and head then proceeds downward and outward to the hands and feet. It fades in the same order it began, from head to feet.

Complications from measles are more common in children younger than 5 years and adults 20 years and older. Complications can include diarrhea, ear infection and pneumonia. Death can occur from severe complications and the risk is higher among younger children and adults. There is no treatment for measles. Bed rest, fluids and control of fever are recommended. Persons with complications may need treatment for their specific problem.

The best way to prevent measles is by getting the measles vaccine. All persons born in 1957 or after should have documentation of at least one dose of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine or other evidence of immunity to measles. For more information about measles, other vaccine-preventable diseases and the shots that protect against them, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661 or visit the website at www.sdiz.org.

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