

9 August 2013

Dear Principal

Information for Parents – Rubella (German Measles) Alert

I am writing to bring the following information to your attention and ask that you share it with parents of your school.

The North Coast Public Health Unit (Lismore Office) has been notified of five (5) cases of Rubella (more commonly known as German measles) in the Northern Rivers area.

Rubella is an infectious viral disease. Common symptoms may include rash, mild fever, runny nose and conjunctivitis.

Infection is especially dangerous during the early stages of pregnancy and may result in miscarriage or cause serious birth defects such as intellectual disability, heart defects, deafness, and eye problems including cataracts. Congenital rubella syndrome occurs in up to 90% of babies born to women who are infected with German measles during the first 10 weeks of their pregnancy.

How is it spread?

German measles is readily spread from an infected person to others by coughing, sneezing or direct contact. It is easily spread to people who have not been vaccinated. It can spread from up to seven days before the rash occurs until four days later.

How is it prevented?

People with rubella should stay at home until at least four days after the rash appeared and avoid contact with people who have not been vaccinated. This will mean staying home from school or childcare during this period.

Vaccination is the only prevention for rubella and is given in combination with measles and mumps (MMR) vaccination. It is important to double check that all members of your family are fully up to date with the MMR vaccine. Two (2) doses of MMR, given at a minimum of 4 weeks apart are required. If in doubt, please ask your doctor to check.

Please take the time to read the attached fact sheet (<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets>) and if you or your household member develops any of these symptoms, see your doctor as soon as possible. Pregnant women who think they may have come into contact with a person with rubella should also call their doctor for advice.

Take this letter with you when you see your doctor.

If you require any further information please call the North Coast Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 and ask to speak to a member of the communicable diseases team.

Yours sincerely,



Greg Bell
Assistant Director Public Health

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