



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

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Multnomah County Health Department investigates measles case

Measles has been confirmed in a traveler who flew from Amsterdam to Seattle to Portland on March 26, and then back to Amsterdam from Portland on March 29. State and local public health officials are investigating the activities of this traveler, and identifying people who might be at risk of becoming ill.

The traveler spent little time in public settings during her visit to Portland. As a result, the risk of infection to the general public is considered low. Despite the low risk, public health officials are:

- Contacting at-risk people on airline flights with the infected traveler (Horizon flight 2243 to Portland, departing Seattle on March 26 at 5:00 pm; and Northwest Airlines flight 92, leaving Portland for Amsterdam on March 29).
- Alerting people who are known to have had contact with the infected person during her visit, and
- Communicating with physicians and hospital emergency departments, asking them to be alert for patients with possible measles symptoms.

Public Health officials are asking the public to take the following steps:

- If you are ill with a fever, cough/cold, red eyes and rash, **CALL** your health care provider. Tell them that you think you might have measles. **Do NOT** drop into a clinic, urgency center or emergency department – measles is easy to spread in medical settings unless special precautions are in place.
- If you are ill (as described above) **DO NOT** go to work, or allow an ill child to go to school.
- Call your health provider or health department if you have any questions or concerns.

Measles is an infectious viral disease causing fever, rash, cough, and eye inflammation. The rash begins on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. Infected people are contagious from about four days before their rash starts to four days afterwards. The virus is spread by sneezing, coughing, and direct contact. Complications from measles are uncommon and include pneumonia, encephalitis and seizures. In the U.S., about 1 in 500 patients with measles die as a result of it.

People born before 1957 who have had measles are most likely immune as are younger people who have been vaccinated. According to Public Health Officer Gary Oxman MD, MPH, “through widespread vaccination, our public health system has greatly reduced the threat of measles. In the 1950’s, almost every child got measles; now it is a rare disease in the U.S. and in Oregon. It is a testimony to the effectiveness of vaccination.”

For more information, see <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/measles/measles.shtml>

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Media Advisory

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