

## *Measles have arrived in Massachusetts*

- \* **All students should be up to date on their measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. If your child is not immunized, please contact your doctor to discuss the vaccine.**
  
- \* Measles is an acute viral respiratory illness. It is characterized by a fever (as high as 105F), weakness, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis followed by a maculopapular rash that usually appears about 14 days after exposure. The incubation period is 7 – 21 days. The brownish-red blotchy rash spreads from the head/face to the trunk to the lower extremities. People with Measles are considered contagious from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash appears. The illness lasts 1- 2 weeks and can be complicated by ear infections, pneumonia, or encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). It can also cause miscarriages or premature delivery in pregnant women. Sometimes, immune-compromised individuals do not develop the rash.
  
- \* Measles are spread by large, infected droplets or direct contact with the nasal or throat fluids of an infected individual. It is also airborne and can be spread by inhaling air that has tiny droplets from sneezes and coughs. Measles can also be acquired by entering a room where an infected individual has been for up to 1½ hours *after* that person has left the room.
  
- \* If your child is NOT up to date on their MMR vaccine, they are considered susceptible and must be **excluded from attending school** from days 5 through 18 during the case's infectious period. If there are multiple cases, all susceptible children and adults shall be excluded for 14 days after exposure to the last case during its infectious period or after the date of rash onset of the last case. ***Measles is one of the few diseases that can be prevented through prompt immunization within 72 hours after exposure.***
  
- \* Measles MUST be reported immediately to the local Board of Health. The regional MIP epidemiologist should also be notified to assist in infection control. Please notify your school immediately, as well, in order to protect the students and staff.

Thank you!~

May 14, 2015