TAMIU Safe: Be Aware about Measles

Source: The City of Laredo Health Department

While there are no confirmed or suspected case of measles in Laredo, last year the United States had the most cases (644) and for 2015, 12 cases in 14 states have been confirmed, most linked to cases originating in California.

The City of Laredo Health Department (CLHD) wants the public to know that as an international border city with a very mobile population, those persons not vaccinated with two doses of (Rubeola) measles vaccine born after 1957 are at risk. Students who have claimed exemption should also get vaccinated to protect themselves and others.

What is Measles?

Rubeola is a highly contagious febrile rash illness caused by a paramyxovirus transmitted via the respiratory route and can last 7-14 days after exposure to someone with measles and rash. A person with measles is highly contagious for approximately four days before the rash appears (unvaccinated person don’t know they are exposed and are susceptible) to at least four days after the rash appears. Persons can complicate with ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis, seizures and death. Symptoms include:

• Blotchy rash beginning at the hairline and face, gradually proceeding to upper neck, downward and outward and can become confluent (entire body features rash).
• Fever, increasing with time (103°-105°F)

• Cough, Runny nose

• Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)

• Feeling run down, achy (malaise)

• May have lack of appetite and diarrhea (especially in infants)

• When the rash appears, a person’s fever may spike to more than 104 degrees Fahrenheit. After a few days, the fever subsides and rash fades.

• Who is at high risk for severe illness and complications from measles:

  • Infants and children aged <5 years

  • Adults aged >20 years

  • Pregnant women

  • People with compromised immune systems, such as from leukemia and HIV infection.

• What to do?

  1. Get vaccinated if not already.

  2. If ill, isolate the patient.
3. Report the patient to the City of Laredo Health Department immediately.

    Persons generally can be presumed immune to measles if they have documentation of two doses of measles vaccine, laboratory evidence of immunity to measles, documentation of physician-diagnosed measles, or were born before 1957. Persons who are not immune should be given MMR vaccine.

    Once an individual has had Measles, they generally develop lifelong immunity from the disease. Measles can be prevented by a two dose vaccination. This is a safe and highly effective vaccine. The first dose of Measles vaccine should be given between 12 and 15 months of age. A second dose of vaccine is given at school entry (4 to 6 years of age). Both doses are generally given as combined measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. Adults are also able to receive the vaccine.

    For more information, please contact the City of Laredo Health Department – Epidemiology Department at 795-4951; for Immunization information contact 795-4947.