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## **Public Health Update**

### **Measles Exposure**

December 13, 2006

The Southern Nevada Health District has learned that a tourist who visited Southern Nevada between Sunday, Dec. 3 and Wednesday, Dec. 6, was recently diagnosed with the measles.

The risk to the public in the case is low; however, because individuals who are not immune to measles might have been exposed during the patient's visit, the health district is raising awareness of the possibility of measles transmission so that persons have an opportunity to receive measles immunization and so that anyone developing measles symptoms will seek medical attention.

Measles can be spread among susceptible people and can result in serious infections complicated by pneumonia, encephalitis, seizures and death. Many individuals born before 1957 had the disease in childhood and younger people are routinely vaccinated against it.

Measles symptoms begin to appear eight to 21 days after exposure and it is contagious from approximately four days before the rash appears through about four days after. Measles can be spread before the characteristic rash appears. Measles causes fever, rash, cough, and red, watery eyes. The fever (often greater than 101 degrees F), cough and other symptoms begin two to four days before the rash appears.

People who have had the measles or have been adequately immunized against it are protected.

Immunity can be determined by a blood test. People are considered immune if:

- they were born before 1957 as many of them had the disease as a child;
- they were born on or after Jan. 1, 1957 and have documentation that they have received at least one dose of measles vaccine since 1968 and it was given on or after the first birthday (measles vaccines used prior to 1968 do not always provide reliable immunity); and
- a blood test for measles antibody is positive.

Immunizations are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the following district public health centers:

- Ravenholt Public Health Center
- East Las Vegas Public Health Center
- Henderson Public Health Center
- North Las Vegas Public Health Center
- Spring Valley Public Health Center – Mondays by appointment only.

For more information about health district immunization clinics call 759-0850.