

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Debbie Stilphen, PIO
850) 983-5200, ext. 175 (Office)
(850) 554-1643 (Blackberry)

CONFIRMED CASE OF MEASLES REPORTED IN SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Milton, FL - The Santa Rosa County Health Department is investigating a confirmed case of measles in a Santa Rosa County resident who recently returned from traveling in Eastern Europe. The individual was briefly hospitalized, but has been released and is now on home isolation and is being cared for by family members. The individual had not received the Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine and did not have natural immunity. The individual is expected to fully recover with no lasting complications. Identifying information will not be released to protect the individual's privacy.

The individual was diagnosed by their private provider who recognized the symptoms of measles and reported it to the health department. Physicians are required under Florida Statute 381 to report all suspected cases of communicable disease.

The Santa Rosa County Health Department is now in the process of identifying and contacting others who may have been exposed to the sick individual and may be at risk of contracting the disease.

Measles is caused by the respiratory virus Rubeola, and is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, watery eyes, a rash and "koplik spots", red spots with bluish white centers that appear in the mouth. The individual may also experience back pain, fatigue and, in some cases may develop pneumonia or encephalitis.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), one or two deaths occur every year for every 1,000 cases reported in the U.S., and up to 200,000 people die every year world wide from the disease. However, measles is easily preventable with the MMR vaccine that many children receive as part of their childhood series of shots. The vaccine is readily available at many pediatricians' offices and through the county health departments.

"If you believe you may have been exposed to someone with measles, and you haven't received the MMR vaccine or think you may not be immune, you should isolate yourself at home and call your health care provider," said Mary Beverly, epidemiologist with the Santa Rosa County Health Department. "And as with any other communicable disease, practice good hygiene if you're sick or caring for a person who may have measles. Wash your hands, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and stay home if you're sick to reduce the chance of spreading the disease."

For more information on measles, go to www.cdc.gov/measles. For information on how to obtain the MMR vaccine, call 850-983-5200, Option 7.

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