

February 3, 2015  
Health Alert  
Measles in NYS

A case of measles has been confirmed in a Bard College student in NYC who traveled on Amtrak train #283 between Penn Station and Albany and on to Niagara Falls on January 25 beginning at 1:20 PM. Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus and is spread by contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people. Measles can lead to serious side effects and, in rare cases, death or spontaneous abortions in pregnant women.

Measles symptoms usually appear in 10 to 12 days after exposure, but can occur as late as 18 days after exposure. Symptoms generally appear in two stages. In the first stage, which lasts two to four days, the individual may have a runny nose, cough and a slight fever. Eyes may become reddened and sensitive to light while the fever gradually rises each day, often peaking as high as 103° to 105° F. Small bluish white spots surrounded by a reddish area may also appear on the gums and inside of the cheeks.

The second stage begins on the third to seventh day and consists of a red blotchy rash lasting five to six days. The rash usually begins on the face and then spreads downward and outward, reaching the hands and feet. The rash fades in the same order that it appeared, from head to extremities. Although measles is usually considered a childhood disease, it can be contracted at any age.

Individuals are not at risk of contracting measles if they are immune. A person is considered immune if they have received two doses of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine OR if they were born before January 1, 1957, OR have a history of laboratory-confirmed measles, OR have a blood test confirming immunity. Unimmunized individuals, including adults, should contact their private health care providers to check on their immunization status. Anyone who believes they might have been exposed, especially pregnant women, should contact their private health care providers.

The single best way to prevent measles is to be vaccinated. More information about measles can be found at:

[http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/measles/fact\\_sheet.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/measles/fact_sheet.htm)