

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

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Media Release

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Measles in air traveller triggers alert

An international passenger arriving in Auckland aboard QANTAS flight QF043 from Sydney on 31 October 2008 has been diagnosed with English measles (morbilli).

Dr Sheryl Jury, Medical Officer of Health, Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS), says "measles is a highly infectious disease that makes children, and sometimes adults, quite unwell for a week to ten days. Now, due to immunisation, measles infection is rare in Auckland but could spread rapidly in unimmunised groups".

The Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) advises any travellers on flight QF043, or their family members, who have symptoms suggestive of measles should immediately seek advice from a doctor (call ahead to alert your doctor about the possibility of measles before visiting to allow them to make arrangements to assess you safely and without infecting others), avoid contact with young children and also alert their local public health service.

Typical symptoms of measles are initial fever, runny nose and sore eyes, followed by a red blotchy rash. People are infectious for 5 days before they develop the rash. The rash starts on the face over 1-2 days and spreads down to the body. The rash will last for 4-7 days. Almost all cases will make a complete recovery.

However it is a highly infectious illness that can sometimes have serious consequences such as pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Up to a third of children may develop complications such as middle ear infection and diarrhoea.

From being exposed to developing symptoms usually takes 8-12 days. New Zealand children are immunised against measles at 15 months and four years of age.

More information is available at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/>

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