

Taiwan CDC advises public to determine need for measles vaccination and get vaccinated prior to traveling overseas as this year's first imported measles case confirmed (2018-03-29)



On March 29, 2018, the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (Taiwan CDC) announced this year's first imported measles case in an over 30-year-old male who resides in northern Taiwan. During March 1 and 4, he visited Thailand. On March 14, he developed symptoms, including fever and cough. On March 15 and 16, he sought medical attention. On March 17, he visited Okinawa, Japan. On March 19, when he developed rashes on limbs, he sought medical attention locally and was hospitalized. Infection with measles was laboratory confirmed in the case. On March 26, he returned to Taiwan and was reported to the competent authority. The local health authority immediately conducted an

epidemiological investigation. Based on the case's activity and exposure history during the incubation period, it is determined that the case acquired his infection in Thailand. As of now, the infectious period has passed and his symptoms have improved.

To prevent further transmission of the disease, the local health authority has implemented a number of prevention measures and identified 69 contacts, including his family members who reside in the same household, people who traveled with him, colleagues, passengers on the same flight, healthcare personnel and patients that he came into contact with when he sought medical attention, to monitor and follow up until April 10, 2018. Currently, 106 contacts have not developed suspected symptoms, while 63 contacts are being followed up. During the infectious period (March 15 and 23), the case traveled by different modes of public transport, including train and airplanes. As measles is a highly infectious disease that is spread by contact with droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of an infected person, either directly or through aerosol transmission, people who took the same train and plane during the aforementioned time are potential contacts and are thus urged to conduct self-health management for 18 days since the last exposure date. If suspected symptoms develop, please put on a mask immediately, seek prompt medical attention and voluntarily notify the physician of the relevant exposure history.

According to the domestic surveillance data compiled by Taiwan CDC, thus far this year, a cumulative total of 1 measles case has been confirmed and it is imported from Thailand. During 2015 and 2017, a cumulative total of 49 measles cases were confirmed in Taiwan, including 30 indigenous cases and 19 imported cases. Specifically, 29 measles cases were confirmed in 2015, 14 were confirmed in 2016 and 6 were confirmed in 2017. The majority of the imported cases came from China (9) and the other came from neighboring countries in Asia.

According to the international epidemic surveillance data compiled by Taiwan CDC, the global measles epidemics have continued to occur. Among the neighboring countries, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, China, and Thailand have reported a higher number of cases and cases have continued to occur in these countries. On the other hand, in Europe, Greece, Ukraine and France have been hit the hardest by measles, while Romania, Italy, Serbia, the United Kingdom have all reported a higher number of cases compared to the previous years. Currently, Taiwan CDC has issued a travel notice of Level 1: Watch for measles to 17 countries, including the aforementioned countries, Kazakhstan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

Measles is more common during late winter and spring. Taiwan CDC reminds that vaccination remains the best way to prevent infection. In Taiwan, the existing routine childhood vaccination schedule recommends a dose of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine to children 12 months

of age. Unvaccinated infants and children, those who do not receive vaccine in a timely manner and those who have never been infected with measles are high-risk groups. Parents are urged to ensure timely vaccination of children under one year old and those who have not completed the MMR vaccine series and avoid bringing unvaccinated children to the affected areas in order to prevent infection. If travel to affected areas with children at the age of 6-12 months is unavoidable, please bring the children to the local health bureau or contracted healthcare provider for one dose of MMR vaccine 2 weeks prior to the trip. Adult travelers planning to visit affected areas are also advised to visit the outpatient travel clinic at contracted hospitals in the nation to determine the need for MMR vaccination 2 to 4 weeks prior to their trip. For more information, please visit the Taiwan CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov.tw> or call the toll-free Communicable Disease Reporting and Consultation Hotline, 1922 (or 0800-001922).

