Indiana State Department of Health
An Equal Opportunity Employer

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
Governor

Gregory N. Larkin, M.D., F.A.A.F.P.
State Health Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2012

CONTACT: Amy Reel
(317) 233-7315

MEASLES CASES RISE TO 15 IN CENTRAL INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS—Indiana now has a total of 15 confirmed cases of measles, state health officials announced today. The most recently confirmed case does not pose an increased risk of spreading the disease to others, however, because the individual has been in self-isolation since they themselves were exposed.

"Through our investigation, we were made aware that this individual was exposed and may be at high risk for developing the disease," said State Health Commissioner Gregory Larkin, M.D. "This is good news, because since we knew about the exposure and risk, this person was able to stay home and avoid exposing anyone else while infectious."

This is the second outbreak of measles Indiana has experienced in less than a year. Measles is rare in the United States due to the widespread use of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccine.

"In general, when we experience measles in the United States, it's a result of an unvaccinated U.S. resident traveling abroad or a foreign visitor from a part of the world where measles is endemic," said State Health Commissioner Gregory Larkin, M.D. "Measles can and does happen in the U.S., but we can safely and easily protect ourselves by becoming vaccinated."

The Indiana State Department of Health has established a hotline to help answer questions from the general public.

- The hotline number is 1-877-826-0011 (TTY/TTD 1-888-561-0044).
- State Health Department staff will be on-hand during the hours of 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday to answer questions.
- Note: Immunization status cannot be verified through this hotline. Individuals unsure of vaccination status are encouraged to contact your health care provider, as they have access to the Indiana Immunization Registry.

Top 5 Hotline Questions Answered:

1. Why am I considered immune if I was born prior to 1957? What if I don't remember having the measles or the vaccine?
Answer: Prior to the advent of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine in 1963, measles was endemic in the U.S. Many children got measles during that time and developed antibodies to prevent reoccurrence of disease. It was considered one of the "childhood diseases" that most kids got. Your health care provider may be able to check your immunization status through the Indiana Immunization Registry, CHIRP, or can test you for immunity.

2. What if I don't know my immune status?
Answer: If you are unsure, you can ask your local health department or health care provider to check your vaccination record. Two doses of MMR are needed to be fully protected.

3. What kind of protection do I get from the vaccine?

Answer: the MMR vaccine is very good at protecting you from measles. Most people will develop antibodies (immunity) with the first dose, but the second dose is needed to boost that immunity and will fully protect 99% of individuals who receive it.

4. What about my child that is less than 1 year of age? Can I take them out in public since they are too young for vaccine?
Answer: Yes. You and your family may continue with normal activities. The State Health Department and local health officials are working with the known cases and then reaching out to those who may have been exposed to make sure they are protected. You can also speak with your pediatrician or health care provider

5. If my child receives a vaccination before 12 months of age (common age for first MMR vaccination), does that count as a valid dose or will he/she still need two doses?
Answer: Children as young as 6 months can receive an MMR vaccine in the event of an outbreak, however vaccinations given prior to 12 months of age will not "count" for school entry purposes in Indiana. Please consult with your pediatrician or health care provider.

About measles
Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. It is rare in the United States due to high levels of vaccination with the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine; however, unvaccinated visitors from other countries can transmit measles to unvaccinated people in the U.S., or unvaccinated U.S. citizens traveling abroad can become infected during travel.

More than 95 percent of people who receive a single dose of MMR will develop immunity to measles, and more than 99 percent will be protected after receiving a second dose. Two doses of the vaccine are needed to be fully protected. Individuals are encouraged to check with their health care providers to ensure vaccinations are up-to-date.

Children are routinely vaccinated for measles at 1 year of age, and again at 4-6 years of age before going to kindergarten, but children as young as 6 months old can receive the measles vaccine if they are at risk. Individuals born before 1957 are presumed to be immune to measles. If you are unsure about your vaccination history, check with your health care provider, as they have access to vaccination records for many Hoosiers through the Indiana Immunization Registry known as CHIRP.

Symptoms
Measles begins with a fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes about 7-10 days after exposure. The fever increases and can get as high as 105 degrees. Two to four days later, a rash starts on the face and upper neck. It spreads down the back and trunk, and then extends to the arms and hands, as well as the legs and feet. After about five days, the rash fades the same order in which it appeared.

Measles is highly contagious. When infected persons sneeze or cough, droplets spray into the air and are inhaled by others. Those droplets remain active and contagious in the air and on infected surfaces for up to two hours. Measles can also be transmitted when moist secretions from the nose or mouth of an infected person come in contact with the mouth, nose or eyes of another person.

What you can do
Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent transmission.

If you are experiencing the symptoms of measles, stay home and call your doctor right away. Alert your doctor if you think you have been in contact with an infected person and be prepared to describe your symptoms. If you are ill with measles, remain home and away from others, especially unvaccinated infants, people with diseases affecting their immune systems, and pregnant women.

For information specific to this measles outbreak, please visit the Indiana State Department of Health's website at www.statehealth.in.gov. Learn how to contact your local health department by visiting http://www.state.in.us/isdh/24822.htm.

For more information about measles, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at http://www.cdc.gov/measles/.

###