

Public Health Clinical alert

27 July 2026

Measles case alert

Key information

- A [public health alert](#) has been issued for a case of measles in the ACT with public exposure locations from 20-24 July.
- Be alert for measles in patients with compatible illness.
- Isolate suspected cases and urgently notify ACT Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) by phone on **(02) 5124 9213**. HCSD can support with testing and public health advice.
- Ensure patients are up-to-date with their measles-containing vaccines, particularly before overseas travel.

What is the situation?

- A case of measles has been notified in the ACT in a recently returned overseas traveller with identified [public exposure locations from 20-24 July](#).
- It typically takes 7-18 days for symptoms to develop after exposure to measles. If anyone has acquired infection from these exposure locations, they may be developing symptoms from now until around 11 August. In some cases, the incubation period may extend beyond 18 days.
- Be alert for measles in patients with compatible illness, especially in people who attended the exposure locations at the listed times, and in returned travellers.

What are the signs and symptoms of measles?

- A 2-4 day prodromal illness with fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.
- A maculopapular rash typically begins on the face and neck and then spreads down the body.
- Measles in previously vaccinated people may present atypically with milder symptoms and a slower, or altered progression of the rash.

Management of suspected cases

Isolate: Measles is highly infectious. Ask the patient to wear a surgical mask and avoid time spent in the waiting room (use another entrance where possible). See the patient in a single room, which should be left empty for at least 30 minutes after use. Use airborne precautions (P2/N95 mask, eye protection, gloves, gown). If referring a patient to another health service, including pathology collection, call ahead to the relevant service so they can arrange for safe assessment.

Notify: [Immediately](#) notify ACT HCSD by phone on (02) 5124 9213 to discuss testing and public health management of patients with a clinically compatible illness.

Test:

1. PCR on a nasopharyngeal or throat swab; AND
2. PCR on first pass urine for measles; AND

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3. Serology for measles (IgM and IgG).

- Collect specimens at the time of review if possible. Mark the test as urgent.
- If arranging for specimen collection through a pathology collection centre, notify the collection centre in advance so that they can arrange for the patient to be safely tested.
- For ACT Pathology, the Canberra Hospital collection centre (Ph: 0418 409 480) is the preferred testing location for the immediate transfer of specimens to the laboratory.

Advise: Individuals suspected of having measles should stay at home until further advice is provided. ACT HCSD may contact the patient to discuss public health advice before a test result is back – please let your patient know. All results (both positive and negative) should be communicated to the patient by the clinician ordering the test.

Vaccination

- Offer measles vaccination for people born during or after 1966 who do not have documentation of two previous doses. Refer to the [NCIRS measles vaccination clinical decision support tool](#) for further information.
- Many adults born from 1966 to the mid-1990s may be under-protected because they have not received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine.
- Measles-containing vaccine is funded by the ACT Government for these people and anyone who does not have immunity to measles demonstrated by serological testing.
- Encourage measles vaccination in consultations prior to overseas travel.
- Consider early vaccination of infants aged 6-12 months if they are travelling overseas – this is funded by the ACT Government. Ideally give the vaccine at least 2 weeks prior to travel. The infant will still require two funded doses to be given from 12 months of age as per the National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule.
- Please consider your MMR vaccine supplies and if needed, order through the Immunisation Section [Vaccine Order](#) form.
- Refer to the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) for further information.

Issued 27/07/2026 by:

Dr Sally Singleton, Deputy Chief Health Officer
ACT Health and Community Services Directorate