FAQs about Measles

What are the signs and symptoms of measles?
- Measles symptoms usually begin 10 – 12 days (up to 21 days) after exposure with a prodrome of fever (up to 105 degrees F), malaise, cough, runny nose, Koplik’s spots (buccal mucosa) and conjunctivitis.
- Two to 4 days later, a maculopapular rash develops around the hairline or ears and spreads downward to the face, trunk and extremities. Severe illness can occur including pneumonia, encephalitis and death.
- Typically, measles patients are contagious from 4 days before to 4 days after rash onset.

How does Measles spread?
Measles is highly infectious and is transmitted by airborne spread of respiratory droplets. Since patients are contagious from 4 days before to 4 days after rash onset, suspect measles cases should not be allowed in patient waiting areas.

Are people at risk for Measles infection in the United States?
Yes, as of 1/23/15, measles has been confirmed in 68 people from 11 states. 59 California residents since late December 2014 have been confirmed and reside in 11 local health jurisdictions. In Los Angeles County (LAC) currently, there are 10 confirmed measles cases, 4 suspect cases with nearly 800 contact investigations ongoing.

What should healthcare professionals do?
Consider measles when evaluating any patient who has an acute rash illness with fever.

Suspect patients should be given a regular mask and immediately placed in an examination room with the door closed. If patients are scheduled for an appointment with the above mentioned symptoms, they should be seen at the end of the day and follow the same masking and rooming procedure listed above. Once the patient leaves the exam room, the room should remain closed for 2 hours and terminally cleaned.

Do not send the patient to the ED unless they require hospitalization and contact the ED first.

Specimen such as IgG and IgM antibodies, NP / throat swab for PCR as well as urine may be requested by LACDPH, therefore:

Please contact the Keck Hospital Operator and ask to be connected to the On – Call Infection Preventionist. Measles cases must be immediately reported to LACDPH by the Infection Preventionist and LACDPH will guide us through their process.