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## **Measles Outbreak Hits Anchorage...Or All Good Things Must Come to an End**

After the enviable record of over three and a half years without a case of measles, the disease has once again appeared in Anchorage. Since September 20, 6 cases have been confirmed in children ranging in age from 9 months to 11 years. Not one of the six children was immunized. Epidemiologic investigation failed to discover where the first case originated. More cases are expected to occur. Immunization records were reviewed in three schools where cases were documented. Out of 178 fifth graders in one school, 21 children had not been immunized. Levels were better in the third grade at two other schools where 6 out of 122 third graders were not immunized. We are currently reviewing immunization records in several Anchorage schools and may significantly extend this part of the investigation.

Measles is **not** a benign disease! It is totally preventable by immunization. All suspect cases of measles should be **immediately** reported to the State Medical Epidemiologist at 272-7534 so that epidemiologic investigation and immunization can be initiated. Serological tests to confirm the diagnosis are offered free of charge. We urge all health care providers to see that our children are immunized. Measles is a preventable disease. Let's again rid the State of this intruder.

(Reported by Linda Jacobs, School Nurse, Dr. Burst, Dr. Alexander, Elmendorf, Betty Wild, Annette Harpster, CDC, Nancy Blaine, School Nurse, Major Gondolfo, Elmendorf)

## **RUBELLA RETURNS**

Alas, our record of over three and a half years without a case of rubella has been shattered also. A 23-month-old child in Anchorage has been confirmed to have the disease. Epidemiologic investigation has failed to reveal the source of the infection and, as yet, no other cases have been discovered. The child was not immunized.

A 31-year-old mother of three was confirmed as having rubella in Glennallen. She picked up her disease while on vacation outside. No secondary cases occurred.

Only our high immunization levels have allowed us to remain free from measles and rubella for so long. The reappearance of these diseases in Alaska is disturbing. Immunize against these preventable diseases!

(Reported by Dr. Gaston, Elmendorf, Jill Real, PHN, Glennallen)

## **Meningococcal Meningitis - Serogroup A**

Since February, 1976, seven confirmed cases and one suspected case of serogroup A meningococcal meningitis have been reported to the State Health Department. There were no serogroup A cases identified in the preceding seven years. The last cases occurred on November 12 and 13 and were in Anchorage residents. Because five cases of serogroup A meningococcal meningitis have occurred among the Fourth Avenue population in Anchorage, the Municipal Health Department will immunize this high risk population with the new Polysaccharide meningococcal vaccine.

It must be emphasized that Rifampin is the treatment of choice for contacts of known cases. All cases of meningococcal meningitis **must** be reported to the State Health Department immediately. Epidemiologic investigation and contact tracing will be initiated immediately. Organisms will be serogrouped and tested for sulfa sensitivity.