NEWSLETTER INFORMATION FOR WHEATBELT SCHOOLS

Fourteen cases of measles have been notified in WA to date in 2019, with more cases expected over the coming weeks. Each case of measles is a public health emergency, requiring identification of contacts. So far this year, over 3000 contacts have been followed-up. Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that can cause serious illness, particularly in young children and adults. People can develop pneumonia and other serious complications from the disease, and often need to be hospitalised.

Immunisation is the best protection against measles. Anyone who is unvaccinated is at highest risk of contracting measles. People need two doses of vaccine to be fully protected. The National Immunisation Program recommends the MMR vaccine (measles, mumps and rubella) at 12 months and 18 months.

If parents are unsure if their child has received 2 doses of MMR vaccine, they can access their child’s immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) through:

- MyGov, by logging into their Medicare online account
- visiting a Medicare or Centrelink Office
- calling the AIR general enquiries line on 1800 653 809 to get the statement posted

Please speak to your School Nurse or your GP if your child requires MMR or any other immunisations to be brought up to date for their age.

Persons born prior to 1966 are usually immune to measles because they had the illness as a child. People born after 1966 are requested to check that they have been vaccinated against the illness. It is also an important travel vaccine for those planning to visit countries with measles.

Further information can be obtained from the Wheatbelt Public Health Nurses on 9690 1720.

8 March 2019