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TO: DeKalb County News Media
FROM: Jane Lux
Public Health Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Measles Health Alert

Jane Lux, Public Health Administrator of the DeKalb County Health Department, wants to alert residents of and visitors to DeKalb, of potential exposure to measles. The Health Department learned from the Illinois Department of Public Health on Friday that there was one case of confirmed measles in a visitor to Illinois from out of the country. The person became ill last week and test results were positive for measles. This person is no longer infectious.

“This individual visited several locations in northern Illinois, including some DeKalb locations,” said Lux. According to Nirav D. Shah, MD, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, “measles is highly contagious and a person with no immunity can become infected simply by being in the same room with someone who has the disease.” To eliminate the potential spread of the disease, The DeKalb County Health Department is in the process of notifying anyone who potentially had contact with this person about their possible exposure.

Potential exposures in DeKalb may have occurred to:

- Guests and staff at the Holmes Student Center Guest Room Hotel on the Northern Illinois University Campus, 340 Carroll Ave, DeKalb on May 13-15.
- Customers and employees at the Walmart, 2300 Sycamore Rd, DeKalb on May 13 from 11:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. on May 14.
- Customers and employees at the Panda Express, 1015 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb on May 14 from noon until 3 p.m.
- Attendees of Northern Illinois University College of Business reception at Barsema Hall Atrium on May 14 beginning at 10 a.m. and a graduation ceremony at the Northern Illinois University Convocation Center, 1525 W Lincoln Hwy, DeKalb beginning at 1:30 p.m.

A person who was potentially exposed and is experiencing a fever of 101 F° or higher, cough, runny nose, and red eyes with or without rash, should call their health care provider to arrange for treatment. These individuals should not go to their doctor’s office or the emergency room as they could infect others around them.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease that causes fever, red and sore eyes, runny nose, cough, and a characteristic rash. Measles is transmitted by contact with an infected person through coughing or sneezing and can remain in the air and on surfaces up to two hours. Infected people are contagious from four days before their rash starts through four days after. Symptoms can appear 7 to 21 days after contact with a measles case.

While people who are fully vaccinated (two doses of the measles, mumps, rubella vaccine) are at little risk of becoming infected, those who have not been vaccinated could become ill.

“This case in Illinois is a reminder of the importance of immunizations,” said Director Shah. “While Illinois did have a cluster of measles cases last year, we typically only see a handful of cases each year. However, measles is much more common in other countries and is only a plane ride away. It’s important that anyone who can be vaccinated get vaccinated. It will help protect you as well as others who can’t be vaccinated, like infants younger than a year old.”

Two does of the vaccine are 97 percent effective at preventing measles infection and is required for all Illinois school children.

Health Department staff is working with the Illinois Department of Public Health and NIU officials. “We will continue to investigate the source of the disease, identify and follow-up with anyone who may have potentially been exposed, and be vigilant for new cases,” said Lux. Northern Illinois University has alerted students, faculty, and staff. Health care providers who suspect a case of measles should contact the Health Department immediately.

“We are most concerned about infants who have not yet been vaccinated because they are too young to receive vaccine, as well as other persons who were not vaccinated against measles, or those with weakened immune systems” Lux said, and she encourages those that may have had exposure to check their vaccination status. Adults born before 1957 are likely to have had measles and/ or mumps disease as a child and are generally considered not to need vaccination.

For more information about measles, call the DeKalb County Health Department at 815.748.2467, or visit health.dekalbcounty.org and click on Health Alert, as well as [cdc.gov/measles/](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/) and <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/measles>. Also, visit our social media pages including Facebook and Twitter.

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