



Government of Samoa

Ministry of Health

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Press Release to be released immediately,

Measles Epidemic

Of the 28 specimens of suspected measles cases sent to Victorian Infectious Disease Reference Laboratory Melbourne, Australia on the 30th Sept 2019, twelve (12) results have been received over the week end. Of these twelve there were four confirmed cases; one adult and three children. All have been treated and discharged with no complications.

On the 2nd of October 2019, we sent another 8 specimens of suspected measles cases. Current results received this afternoon of these eight specimens sent revealed three new confirmed cases. Of these three positive cases, two were children under five years and 1 was an adult of 22 years old. All have been treated and discharged.

A total of seven confirmed cases have been reported to date. In anticipation, we now confirm a Measles Epidemic.

The tragic case last week which resulted in the loss of life is a highly suspected case of measles based on clinical assessment and evaluation. We are currently awaiting laboratory confirmation. The deceased child of one year two months was admitted on the 8th October 2019 with a history of febrile convulsions, cough and skin rash typical of measles associated with severe dehydration. Verification of immunization status for this child revealed that he has not been vaccinated against measles.

The Ministry of Health advises and encourages the public to get vaccinated against measles. Vaccination against measles is available at all health facilities including TTM Hospital Motootua and MTII Hospital Tuasivi. Our main Immunization Clinic at TTM Hospital Motootua opens Mondays to Fridays from 8.00am – 8.00pm daily and Saturdays from 8.00 am – 1.00pm. The Immunization Clinic for MTII Hospital Tuasivi, also opens Mondays to Fridays from 8.00am – 8.00pm and Saturdays from 8.00 am – 1.00pm.

The public is hereby reminded that it is important to take preventative measures to control the spread of measles. The following precautions is advised:

1. Avoid overcrowded living environments and engaging in public gatherings
2. Keep children home from school if sick.
3. Ensure vaccination status of your child is up to date for all vaccine preventable diseases.
4. It is important to stay calm and not to panic. Take panadol or paracetamol syrup (for children) if having fever and apply cool sponging.
5. Ensure to drink plenty of fluids and maintain good hydration
6. Seek medical advice at your nearest health center if child's condition becomes worse.
7. Cover your nose when coughing or sneezing or wear a mask
8. Do not share beddings, clothes, drinks etc,etc
9. For further information on measles please contact nearest Health facility or call
10. Good hand washing using soap and clean water after sneezing and coughing and when caring for the sick.

For further information, please contact Dr Robert Thomsen on 66503 or Tevaga Dr Ponifasio Ponifasio on 66500 or Dr Sarah Brown on 66723 or your healthcare provider.