

Thursday January 7, 1999 6:01 PM ET (Yahoo news)

Measles outbreak puts focus on vaccine

NEW YORK, Jan 07 (Reuters Health) – In 1998, Anchorage, Alaska had the largest outbreak of measles in the US in 2 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Most of the cases occurred in a single high school, and almost entirely in students who had at least one measles vaccination. The finding highlights the importance of getting two doses of the measles vaccine to maintain immunity, according to a CDC report released Thursday.

The outbreak began with a 4-year-old child visiting Anchorage from Japan, who came down with the measles and was briefly hospitalized. The second case occurred 26 days later in a 16-year-old high school student.

In all, a total of 33 people who ranged in age from 2 to 28 became sick. Twenty-nine of those had received at least one dose of measles-containing vaccine, and one individual had two doses of vaccine. Seventeen cases occurred in one high school. Overall, only 1 out of the 2,186 students did not have at least one dose of measles vaccine, and 51% had two or more doses.

An emergency order was issued by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services requiring all schoolchildren in Anchorage to have two doses of measles-containing vaccine by November 16, 1998, and the requirement was later extended to all Alaskan schoolchildren.

“The occurrence of this outbreak primarily in one school, despite the extremely high one-dose measles vaccine coverage, demonstrates the importance of school requirements for a second dose of measles-containing vaccine,” according to the authors. “The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that all students from grades kindergarten through 12 have two doses of measles-containing vaccine by 2001.”

SOURCE: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 1999;47:1109-1111.

source of above:

<http://www.whale.to/vaccines/measles.3.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056144.htm>

At the high school where the 17 cases occurred, based on school records, only one of 2186 students had not received at least one dose of MCV before the outbreak; 1057 (49%) had received one dose of MCV, and 1112 (51%) had received two or more doses. Estimated vaccine efficacy for two or more doses of MCV was 100%.

[17/1057 = 1.6 percent]