

Measles and Pesach Guidance for Shuls, April 2019

Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt and Dr. Eddie Reichman for Young Israel of Woodmere and shared through YU's Center for the Jewish Future.

You are all doubtless aware of the recent Measles outbreaks in New York, New Jersey, Michigan and Israel. It is our objective to make sure that we all have a HEALTHY and happy Pesach in the fullest sense of the words. Out of concern for our collective welfare, we are writing you with some basic facts and recommendations to keep us safe and healthy during the holiday.

There is NO IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR CONCERN at this time in our community. Yet, we have decided to share this information with you as there are steps that can possibly be taken before the holiday which may be helpful for you.

Measles is a highly contagious, serious disease. Fortunately, only a small percentage of people develop serious complications. It is preventable through vaccination.

We present the following recommendations for both adults and children to make this as healthy a Pesach as possible, especially as we have people coming (and going back home) to many different neighborhoods.

We STRONGLY RECOMMEND that EVERYONE should be up to date on ALL contagious illness vaccinations, but especially Measles (part of the MMR vaccine).

ADULTS:

If you have received the recommended 2 doses of the MMR vaccine, no further action is recommended at this time.

If you had measles as a child, you are protected and no action is necessary.

If you were born before 1957, it is assumed that you are immune (you

probably had measles), and no further action is required. If you have reason to believe that you are not immune (e.g., if you had a blood test showing no immunity to Measles and / or you have no history of having measles), consult your physician regarding the administration of the MMR vaccine. It is safe at any age.

People born between 1963 and 1968 may have received a measles vaccine that is less perfect in generating immunity. From 1968 to 1989, everyone vaccinated received a very good vaccine (similar to vaccine used today) but only one dose was recommended. In the setting of an outbreak in the community you live in, please see your physician to discuss whether a blood test to check your immunity and / or vaccination is appropriate.

Any adult who did not have measles, has not been vaccinated, or knows that they received only one dose of the MMR vaccine, should be vaccinated. Please consult your physician about receiving the vaccination ASAP.

CHILDREN:

Please confirm for your own knowledge that all of your children have received the required 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.

If your children received the first dose of MMR, but are not old enough to have received the second vaccine, which is usually given between ages 4 and 6, we recommend that you discuss with your pediatrician if they should receive the second dose early. This would be strongly recommended if there was an outbreak in the community you are in.

If your child is less than 1 year old (the age when the first dose is typically administered), but older than 6 months, we recommend you discuss with your pediatrician if they should receive the first vaccine dose early. This would be strongly recommended if there was an outbreak in the community you are in.

We ask please that ALL CHILDREN who attend the children's groups or trips be up to date with their vaccinations. If your child is less than one year old, we recommend that you discuss with your pediatrician about

attending public activities.

DURING PESACH:

If during Pesach you or your child develop any rash AND fever we ask that you please exercise the utmost precaution and obtain a medical evaluation BEFORE you enter any public spaces including shul.

Again, there is no cause for concern at this time in our community. However, with all the guests coming to our community from other places, possibly where exposure to measles occurred, we are being extra cautious.

We sincerely hope that you will find these recommendations useful, and receive them in the spirit in which they are intended.

If we follow these basic guidelines, iy"H we will all have a wonderful, HEALTHY and happy Pesach.