

Measles Epidemic Is Now In Progress In North Carolina

2,399 Cases Reported In State During January And February

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An epidemic of measles is under way in North Carolina, according to Doctor Charles P. Stevick, Director of the State Board of Health's Division of Epidemiology. While there were only 1,353 cases reported for the entire year of 1948, there were 2,399 cases reported during January and February of this year. The 1947 total was 5,000 cases.

According to Doctor Stevick, measles is one of the few remaining diseases that occur from time to time in epidemic form. "While poliomyelitis occurs in epidemics at intervals that are totally unpredictable," he said, "measles usually can be expected to appear in North Carolina in epidemic form about every other year. The largest number of cases reported in the last ten years occurred in 1938, when there were 50,000 cases. In that year, there were 251 deaths."

The epidemiologist pointed out that, due to the fact that only 1,353 cases occurred in 1948, the present year can be expected to have a high measles incidence. "This expectation," he pointed out, "has proven correct by case reports received by the State Board of Health so far this year. 'Epidemics,' he went on, 'usually start in December and reach their peak in March, April and May. In January, 1949, there were 802 cases reported, and in February, 1,597.'

Quoting from a leaflet issued by the State Board of Health, entitled "Facts About Measles", which is available to the public upon application, Doctor Stevick gave the following information about measles, in view of the fact that an epidemic appears underway:

"Measles or Roseola is one of the most common of the communicable diseases. The name is frequently confused with German Measles or Rubella, which is an entirely different and less severe disease, although it does produce certain similar symptoms.

"Measles is so highly contagious that practically no one escapes having it sooner or later. Most of the cases occur before the age of ten years. The mortality rate is low, except in extremely young children; however, serious complications can occur at any age. Most measles deaths are caused by pneumonia. Other complications are bronchitis and ear infections.

Symptoms Of Measles

"The symptoms of this disease resemble those of a cold the first few days, gradually increasing in severity, with an irregular, steadily rising fever. On about the fourth day, the skin eruption appears. It occurs first on the face and neck and during the next 24 to 48 hours spreads to the chest and extremities. The fever usually falls after the rash has stopped spreading, although the cough, watery eyes and nasal discharge last several more days.

"The rash consists of spots that are raised only slightly above the surface of the skin. The spots are

pinhead size when they first appear and soon grow larger so that many of them run together to form irregular blotches. The color is pink the first day or two, and they slowly turn red, then brown. About one week after the rash appears the skin may begin to peel in fine bran-like flakes.

"A person who is infected with measles can spread the disease to others for 24 to 48 hours before the symptoms appear. Since these first symptoms are not much different from those of a cold, it often happens that such a person spreads the disease to many other individuals before he is isolated. That is the reason why it is almost impossible to escape infection permanently.

"Although measles is a serious disease, and there is still no effective way of preventing its occurrence permanently, we do have a means of preventing serious complications, and thereby reducing the dangers when it does occur.

"It has been noted that, in 1938, there were 251 deaths from this disease. Since that year, there has been a noticeable decline in deaths, in spite of the fact that there has been no definite reduction in the number of cases. This decline in deaths has been due to two developments: The first is the discovery of sulfa drugs and penicillin for treatment of pneumonia and similar complications of measles, and the second is the use of serum for small children. This serum is taken from persons who have had the disease. Since the globulin part of the serum is used, it is usually spoken of as immune globulin. Parents can do much to reduce the danger from measles in their children by consulting their physicians or health departments regarding the use of immune globulin.

"The method of using this substance is described in the leaflet from which we quoted a few minutes ago. To quote further from the Board of Health's leaflet on measles:

"There is no vaccine available at present for producing permanent immunity against measles. Such immunity comes only after an attack of the disease. Second attacks are very rare. A certain amount of temporary immunity is inherited by babies of mothers who have had measles. This lasts until about the age of six months. In recent years the injection of blood serum from persons who have had measles has been used to produce temporary immunity in children who have been exposed. If the serum is injected just before or a day or two after exposure, the disease will usually be prevented entirely; however, the temporary immunity produced in this way lasts only a month or less and the child again becomes susceptible. The serum is used in this way only for very young babies or for persons ill with other diseases.

Modification Method

"The most common use of immune serum is to bring about partial prevention of measles attacks so that permanent immunity will be produced by the actual occurrence of the disease but in a sufficiently mild form to avoid the serious complications. To accomplish this purpose, the serum is given on the fifth day after

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exposure in the correct dose to suit the age of the patient. If it is given later than this, it usually has no effect at all.

"In other words, what is desired is for the child who is not too small or who is not already weakened to have measles and thereby become permanently immune since there is no other way for permanent immunity to be produced. However, by receiving immune globulin exactly 5 days after exposure the child will usually have only a mild case with little danger from complications.

"Whether or not immune globulin should be given a particular child and the exact time that it should be given must be determined for each child by his family physician.

"Your local health department will gladly assist any parent in making arrangements to have the serum given."

State Takes Over Oak Grove Road

One Mile Leading From Route 37 at R. E. Coffield's Store

Register of Deeds M. L. Bunch, clerk to the Chowan County Commissioners, was notified last week that the State Highway and Public Works Commission at its meeting held January 27 had approved State maintenance of the Oak Grove road for a distance of one mile leading from Route 37 at R. E. Coffield's store.

The stretch of road becomes unpassable at times, which was brought

out when the County Commissioners were requested to ask the state to maintain it. What the gentlemen in Congress appear to need is exercises in producing.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

Uncle Natchel's FERTILIZER TALK



"One of our neighbor farmers usually puts about 150 pound of Chilean Soda on his oats for top-dressing. Last spring he hauled it to the field in a wagon. Wherever he stop to fill the distributor, some of the Soda spilled on the ground.



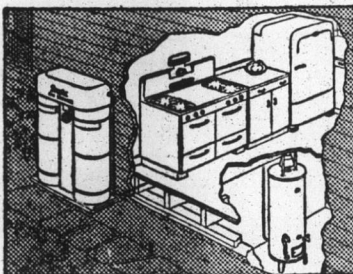
"All season long those spots where the wagon done stood look greener and grewed thicker than the rest of the field. The farmer figured that every place he stop must'a got about 300 pound of Soda an acre and made twice as much oats. He told me, 'I should'a parked that wagon all over the field!'"



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