

# Measles

It's uncommon but still dangerous, says county

Parents, physicians and schools to make certain their children, patients, and students are protected against measles, the Oakland County Health Division warns.

The advisory comes in the wake of recent reports of measles outbreaks in parts of California, Texas, Ohio and North Carolina.

"We haven't confirmed any cases of measles in Oakland County so far this year, but we've received reports of undetermined rash illnesses, some of which are clinically consistent with measles," said county epidemiologist, Joel Blotstein.

MEASLES, CAUSED by a virus, typically results in a rash illness lasting four to 10 days.

Although measles was a very common childhood illness in previous generations, the development of vaccines against it in the 1960s, along with immunization programs and requirements, have resulted in greatly

reduced levels of the disease over the past two decades.

Cases continue to occur despite the existence of a safe and effective vaccine against measles. This frustrates the public health and medical communities.

In each of the last several years, there have been outbreaks of measles in various parts of the U.S., Blotstein said.

"Although there are several contributing factors in the persistence of this preventable disease, the biggest obstacle is that too many children are not getting vaccinated."

The last large outbreak of measles in Oakland County, he said, occurred in 1985 and involved a group of high school students.

IN RECENT years adolescents and young adults have been among the groups hit hardest by measles outbreaks, he said.

"In the pre-vaccine era, practical-

ly everyone got measles as a child. In the late '60s and '70s, use of the vaccine grew and cases of measles declined — and so did the chance of a child being exposed to measles."

"But since measles vaccination wasn't universal, some of the kids who never got the illness never got the vaccine, either. Now they are adolescents, college students, and young adults, and they don't have immunity to measles."

Measles is highly contagious. It is spread through the air over short distances by coughs and sneezes.

"When there are a lot of non-immune persons together in one area — a high school classroom, a college dormitory, a day care center — and someone comes down with measles, the unprotected persons are very like to get it, too."

DR. CAROLYN Bird, chief of medical services at the health division, said measles used to be com-

mon, but it has never been completely harmless. "Complications of measles can include severe pneumonia, brain infections, hospitalization, and even death."

Health experts say children should be immunized against measles at 15 months of age. The injection used usually contains vaccines against German measles (also called rubella) and mumps as well.

Children vaccinated when they were younger than 12 months of age should be re-vaccinated. Most states now have laws requiring youngsters to be protected against measles and several other childhood preventable diseases before they enter school.

## Sexual abuse is OU workshop topic

A leading authority on sexual abuse will conduct a two-day public workshop on the subject Monday and Tuesday, March 20-21, at Oakland University.

Nicholas Groth is a clinical psychologist who, for more than two decades, has worked with both victims and offenders in cases of rape, incest and child molestation. He will conduct the workshop to be held in Varner Hall on the Rochester campus.

The workshop is jointly presented by Life Cycle Family Counseling of Northville, Glen Eden Hospital and OU's counseling department.

Groth will explore the myths and misconceptions about sexual assault as it applies to the offender and the victim, the impact of abuse on the child victim, the differences between normal sexual activity among adolescents and the assaultive behavior of juvenile sex offenders and the psychological treatment and strategies for dealing with sexual offenders.

Groth is executive director of Forensic Mental Health Associates, Webster, Mass.

Cost of the two-day workshop is \$85. Reservations may be made by phoning 348-5584.

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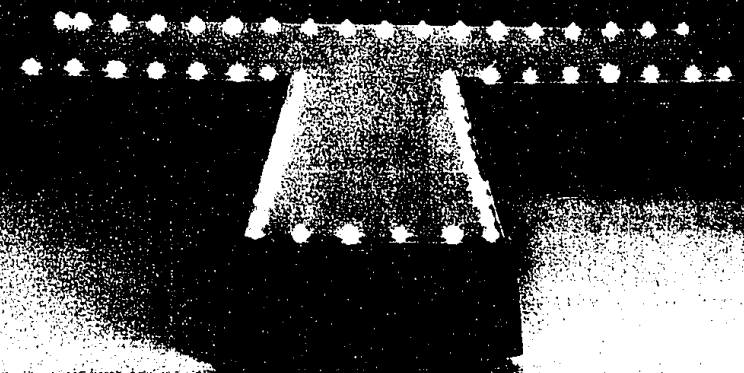
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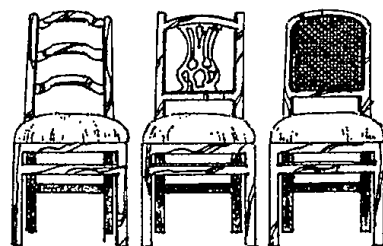
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