# Triple Epidemic and Measles Exposure Raise Health Concerns in Australia and Philadelphia



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**Australia:** Health authorities in Australia are grappling with a significant surge in flu, Covid-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cases. Falling vaccination rates are exacerbating the issue. Recent data shows that over 2,000 individuals contracted the flu in New South Wales in the first week of May 2024, marking a 16% rise compared to the previous year. Last year, the country reported 3,696 hospitalizations and 379 deaths from influenza.

NSW Chief Health Officer Dr. Kerry Chant has emphasized the necessity of flu vaccinations as flu season approaches its peak in six to eight weeks. In 2023, flu cases were prevalent among children aged five to nine and those under four years old, a trend that is continuing this year. Holly Seale, an associate professor at UNSW, noted that only 7% of children under five have received flu shots so far. She also highlighted that overall vaccination rates have dropped by 16% compared to the same period last year.

**Philadelphia, USA:** Health officials have confirmed a new measles case in Northeast Philadelphia and Montgomery County. The patient, who sought care at Holy Redeemer Hospital, tested positive, making this the first measles case since an outbreak last winter that included nine confirmed cases. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Montgomery County officials are contacting individuals who may have been exposed at a CVS Pharmacy in Northeast Philadelphia on May 15 and at Holy Redeemer Hospital on May 16 and 17.

Measles is a highly contagious airborne virus, and symptoms typically appear up to two weeks after exposure. The CDC underscores the importance of the MMR vaccine, which is effective against measles, mumps, and rubella. Montgomery County Medical Director Rich Lorraine advises unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated to prevent possible spread.

These concurrent health challenges underscore the importance of maintaining high vaccination rates and public health vigilance.

*Note: This article uses British English for an Australian audience and maintains a neutral tone in presenting the facts.*