

## HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Patrick Galange, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: February 14, 2025

RE: Measles outbreaks across Ontario and protecting patients over March Break

---

### QUICK FACTS

- Southwestern Ontario is experiencing measles outbreaks, and while international travel was the initial source of outbreaks, all individuals with recent measles infections were exposed to the virus in Canada.
- As of [February 12, 2025](#), 99 cases of measles (67 confirmed, 32 probable) have been reported in Ontario in association with this outbreak. Outbreak cases have occurred in four public health units: Southwestern Public Health, Grey Bruce Health Unit, Grand Erie Public Health (formerly Brant County Health Unit and Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit), and Chatham-Kent Public Health
- Ahead of the March Break, please ensure you, your staff and your patients are up to date with your/their measles vaccination.
- Consider measles in the differential diagnoses, especially in returning travelers with respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, and a maculopapular rash (3-5 days after initial symptoms) starting on face and spreading downwards.
- Do not wait for lab confirmation:
  - **Immediately** report suspected/confirmed cases to Public Health by calling 311 or 905-825-6000. If needed, Public Health will facilitate sample transport to PHO lab.
- Continue to provide immunizations to susceptible clients as per the [Ontario Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule](#) and the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). One dose of MMR may be considered in children aged 6 to 11 months of age, travelling to areas/countries where disease is of concern (note that 2 doses are still required at  $\geq 1$  year of age).

### KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

#### *Diagnostic Testing*

- If you suspect measles:
  - Place your patient in a single room, negative air flow room preferred.
    - If unavailable: Your patient should wear a mask, be assessed at the end of the day, and immediately be placed in a single closed room upon arrival to clinic.
  - Post-visit: Keep the room unused for 2 hours. **Advise patient to self-isolate until results are available.**
  - Send patients to a hospital ER only if clinically indicated and after calling ahead to minimize high-risk exposures in hospital settings.
- **Specimen Collection:**
  - Indicate STAT on lab requisitions. Include travel history and vaccination status on the requisition.

- Recommended samples:
  - Nasopharyngeal and/or throat swab PCR (within 7 days of rash onset) **AND** urine PCR (within 14 days of rash onset)
  - Refer to [PHO Measles-Diagnostic-PCR](#) guidelines for details
- Serology testing is **not** recommended for diagnosing acute infection. Refer to [PHO Measles – Serology](#) for details.
- To facilitate timely testing when needed, ensure specimen collection supplies, including viral swabs, are readily available. To order specimen collection supplies, use the PHOL [Requisition for Specimen Containers and Supplies](#). See [PHOL Kit and Test Ordering Instructions](#) for more information.

### **Measles Immunization**

- Efficacy of a single dose of measles vaccine, given at 12 or 15 months of age, is estimated to be 85% to 95%, and is almost 100% with a second dose.
- All Ontarians are eligible for **one or two publicly funded doses** of measles-containing vaccine depending on their age and risk factors. Refer to the [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario](#) for details on routine, high-risk and catch-up schedules.
- One dose of MMR may be offered to children aged 6 to 11 months of age, travelling to areas/countries where disease is of concern. Note: 2 doses are still required at  $\geq 1$  year of age.
- For non-healthcare workers, if immunization status is unclear, vaccination is preferred over serology. Refer to [PHO Measles-Serology](#) for details.
- Ensure all staff and healthcare providers in your office/clinic have:
  - Two doses of documented measles vaccination OR documented laboratory evidence of immunity.
    - This also applies to staff members born prior to 1970.
  - **Health care workers without appropriate documentation may be excluded from work if deemed to be exposed to a confirmed measles case.**
- Ensure that measles-containing vaccines are readily available in your office. Vaccines can be ordered from Halton Region Public Health through the online [Vaccine Order Form](#).
- Advise patients and/or their parents/guardians to report all immunizations they receive to Public Health.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on Measles and the Risk to Canadians - Canada.ca](#) (Jan 29, 2025)
- [PHO ENHANCED EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SUMMARY - Measles in Ontario](#) (Jan 30, 2025)
- [Measles: Information for Health Care Providers, 2nd Edition](#) (Aug 30, 2024)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL [DOCTORS@HALTON.CA](mailto:DOCTORS@HALTON.CA).