

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
TEL: 905-825-6000 FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians

Medical Chiefs of Staff: Joseph Brant Hospital, Halton Healthcare (Oakville, Milton and Georgetown Hospitals)

Chairs of: Family Practice, Paediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery

Chief of Laboratory Services and Infection Control Practitioners

Halton Midwives

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: March 20, 2019

RE: Preparing for Measles in Health Care Settings in Halton Region

Recent cases of measles in Halton, Ontario and across Canada have reminded us how potentially vulnerable our institutions and communities are to this very infectious disease. Health care facilities can reduce this risk by ensuring there are appropriate policies and procedures in place.

HEALTH CARE WORKER VACCINATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Most measles cases are identified after visiting one or more health care settings. In order to prevent the spread of infection, it is critically important that all employees with patient contact are immunized, and that this immunization is documented in health care facility records.

In the event of a suspected or actual measles case in an office or institution, the Halton Region Health Department may request immunization documentation of all staff and volunteers who may have been exposed. Health care workers who do not meet criteria for documented measles immunity will be excluded from work for the 21 days following exposure, resulting in disruption to staffing and costs to institutions. This can be easily avoided by ensuring that all employees and volunteers have two doses of measles containing vaccine or serologic proof of immunity documented in office, hospital or institutional records.

Having accessible staff records in case of a measles exposure helps the Halton Region Health Department obtain necessary information in a timely manner and prevents exclusions from work. Please refer to *Guidelines for the prevention and control of measles outbreaks in Canada*, Appendix G, for assessing Health Care Worker (HCW) susceptibility to measles at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/13vol39/acs-dcc-3/index-eng.php>.

ASSESSING AND TREATING SUSPECTED MEASLES CASES

Measles can be transmitted by contact, droplet and airborne routes, including sharing air that a measles case had been breathing up to two hours after they have left the area. To prepare for a suspected measles case, offices and institutions should have policies and procedures to ensure:

- Patients with suspected measles are seen at the end of the day (if possible) and provided with a mask and isolated in a separate room upon arrival, minimizing time in triage or reception.
- Prior to collecting specimens, the assessing health care worker (physician or nurse) should immediately report the suspect case to Halton Region Health Department (Call 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866). The Halton Region Health Department will provide support regarding appropriate specimen collection and isolation measures, as well as collecting information about potentially exposed individuals.
- The assessing health care worker should collect **all** the appropriate specimens: nasopharyngeal (or throat) swab, urine PCR, measles IgG and IgM in appropriate specimens containers. Refer to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory Test Index on Measles available here: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/laboratory-services/test-information-index/measles-diagnostic-pcr>.
- Patients are advised to isolate at home until 4 days after the onset of rash.

Please report all suspected or confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (formerly Reportable Diseases) to the Halton Region Health Department as soon as possible. Diseases marked *, including measles, should be reported immediately by telephone (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Other diseases can be reported the next working day by phone or by fax (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm only). Call 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit halton.ca.

If any link provided in this memo does not work, please cut and paste it into your web browser.