

March 25, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Re: Measles Update

Measles is a highly contagious and potentially serious viral infection. There have been recent measles cases in several Ontario jurisdictions and large outbreaks in Europe, the United States and elsewhere. Most cases of measles have been linked to travel outside of Ontario.

Measles can cause serious illness and death. Infants under one year of age, unimmunized pregnant individuals and people with weakened immune systems are at increased risk of complications.

Measles symptoms begin 7 to 21 days after infection and may include high fever, cough, runny nose, red watery eyes (pink eye) and a red rash lasting 4 to 7 days.

What can I do to protect myself and my family?

1. Ensure you are up to date with measles vaccination, especially ahead of international travel.

Individuals without an immunization record of their measles vaccines may need to repeat vaccination - it is not harmful to receive an additional dose(s).

Children

- Children receive two doses of measles vaccine as part of routine vaccination, one dose at 12 months of age and a second dose between 4-6 years old
 - Infants between 6-11 months may receive a dose of measles vaccine if travelling (Note: Two additional doses of measles vaccine must still be administered after 12 months of age to ensure long-lasting immunity)
 - Children under 4 years of age who have received one dose of measles vaccine on or after 12 months of age, may receive a second dose of measles vaccine if travelling (Note: there must be 4 weeks separating doses of measles vaccine)

Adults

- Adults born prior to 1970 are generally considered immune to measles
 - A dose of measles vaccine is recommended for those travelling
- Adults born in or after 1970 may have received 1 or 2 doses of measles vaccine. If one dose has been received, a second is recommended for:
 - Travellers
 - Healthcare workers
 - Post-secondary students

It is important that parents/guardians report their child's vaccinations to Public Health. Health care providers do not report these vaccinations to Public Health. Visit regionofwaterloo.ca/vaccines to report your child's vaccinations.

2. Monitor for signs and symptoms of measles.

Monitor yourself and your family for signs and symptoms of measles, especially after you return from international travel. If you develop symptoms:

- Limit your contact with other people
- Call your health care provider or a walk-in clinic and notify them about your symptoms before an in-person appointment so that they can take precautions to prevent others from getting sick
- Wear a medical mask when seeking care

For more information about measles, please visit
regionofwaterloo.ca/measles