

Ministry of HealthOffice of Chief Medical Officer
of Health, Public HealthBox 12,
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3**Ministère de la Santé**Bureau du médecin hygiéniste
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Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

February 20, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Medical Officers of Health, Local Public Health Agencies

FROM: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health

RE: Measles Preparedness

In December 2023, the World Health Organization reported an alarming 30-fold rise in measles cases in Europe. In recent weeks, the Pan-American Health Organization has reported detection of imported measles cases in the Americas. Currently, there are [four active cases](#) of measles in Canada, two of which are in Ontario in the Region of Peel and City of Toronto. Given this dramatic rise in cases globally, health system partners in Ontario must be prepared for the continued importation of cases and potential outbreaks.

While measles is no longer considered endemic in Canada, outbreaks can happen when susceptible individuals (e.g., unvaccinated) travel to and return from countries where measles is circulating. Importation and resultant local transmission can, and has, led to measles outbreaks in Canada.

With the recent measles activity in Ontario and international travel anticipated over March break, Ontario Health and Local Public Health Agencies are asked to ensure that all health care providers:

- **be encouraged to support patients in receiving all routine vaccinations (including measles)** according to the [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario](#). In Ontario, two doses of measles vaccine (MMR) are routinely given, the first dose at 1 year of age and the second dose at 4 to 6 years of age.
 - In advance of any upcoming international travel, patients should be encouraged to ensure their immunizations are up to date. In addition to routine immunizations, the following is recommended for those at higher risk of exposure to measles:
 - Infants 6 to 11 months of age who are travelling to areas with increased measles transmission should be immunized with one dose of MMR. Two additional doses are required on or after the first birthday.
 - Adults 18 years of age and older who have previously received one dose of MMR should receive a second dose if they are health care workers, post-secondary students, planning to travel to areas with increased measles transmission or based on the health care provider's clinical judgment.
- **communicate with patients that vaccines are highly effective in preventing disease transmission**, in light of measles activity and especially in those in communities with low coverage, and;
- **are alerted to include measles in their differential diagnoses**, particularly in returning travellers with respiratory symptoms.
 - Measles is a reportable disease, and any suspected cases should be promptly reported by health care providers to their local public health unit.
 - Suspected measles cases should be placed under airborne precautions and tested. More information on testing can be found at the [Public Health Ontario Laboratory Test Information Sheet For Measles](#).

I ask that you communicate information locally to primary care providers, urgent care, after hours clinics, emergency departments, parents/guardians and others, especially as we lead up to the March break period.

To disseminate information and alert system partners to measles an eCTAS was sent out on February 16, 2024. Details are also being shared through provincial primary care associations/groups.

Thank you for sharing this critical information on measles with your local partners, as well as for your ongoing support and efforts to date in ensuring Ontarians are protected from vaccine preventable diseases.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kieran Michael Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC, FCAHS
Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health

Attachments: eCTAS – Measles

- c: Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health
- Dr. Christopher Simpson, Executive Vice-President, Medical, Ontario Health
- Michael Sherar, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario