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Measles Recommendations Ahead of March Break Travel

Attention: Physicians, Hospitals, CNE, ER Manager, ER Physician, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Community Health Centres, Walk-In Urgent Care Clinic, Nurse Practitioner, Ontario Health, Ontario Health Teams, Midwives, Family Health Team, Indigenous Healthcare & Community, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Neighbouring Health Units, Paramedic Services, Corrections

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Increase in Measles Cases

Measles is increasing around the world, including a 30-fold increase in Europe in 2023, which continued through much of 2024. In the United States, 285 cases were identified in 2024 and 93 cases have been reported for 2025, to date; over 70% of cases in 2024 were among children and adolescents who had not received a measles vaccine.

In Canada, 77 cases have been reported to date for 2025 (current as of February 24). **Currently, there are [34 active cases of measles in Canada](#), 25 of which are in Ontario, primarily in the Grand Erie Public Health and Southwestern Public Health regions.** While there have been no recent confirmed cases of measles in Simcoe Muskoka, there have been numerous contacts identified in our region. In addition, pandemic-related postponement or delay of routine childhood immunizations, including measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, has likely left more individuals susceptible to the measles virus.

SMDHU recommends:

- Vaccinating patients who are not up-to-date, especially those planning to travel, including considering infants 6 months of age and older who are traveling to areas with increased measles transmission.
- Consider measles testing in a returning traveler with symptoms. Promptly isolate patient and follow Infection Prevention and Control airborne precautions (see below).

1. Vaccinate

Vaccinate patients who are not up-to-date especially those planning to travel:

- Check vaccination records for all patients to ensure they are up to date on measles (MMR) vaccine. Vaccinations may have been missed due to the pandemic.



- Infants **6 months to 11 months of age** normally do not receive MMR vaccine but for those who are travelling to areas with increased measles transmission, they should be immunized with one dose of MMR. Two additional doses would still be required on or after the first birthday.
- Preschoolers who are travelling can receive their second dose of MMRV before their 4th birthday to provide them with protection earlier.
- For school-age children, ensure the second dose of MMRV was received at 4 to 6 years of age.
- 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 or based on the health care provider's clinical judgement.
- Those born in 1970 or after who are planning to travel outside of Canada are also recommended a second dose.
- People born before 1970 in Canada are presumed immune due to circulating measles in Canada at that time. However, if they are traveling outside of Canada and do not have a history of lab-confirmed infection or evidence of immunity, it is prudent to immunize them with 1 dose given the increased activity of measles globally.
- All Ontarians, regardless of date of birth, are eligible for two publicly funded doses of measles-containing vaccine based on the health care provider's clinical judgment and the needs of the patient (e.g., health care worker, post-secondary student, planning to travel where measles is circulating).
- Note: Vaccination over serology is generally preferred.
- For more detailed information on measles immunization, go to the [Canadian Immunization Guide measles chapter](#).

Ensure that you and your staff are immune to measles.

- Only the following should be accepted as proof of measles immunity:
 - Documentation of receipt of two doses of measles-containing vaccine on or after the first birthday, with doses given at least four weeks apart, OR
 - Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Given reports of transmission of measles to health care providers (HCPs) with presumptive immunity, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Ontario advises **all HCP, regardless of presumptive immunity to measles are to wear a fit tested, seal-checked N95 respiratory when providing care to a patient with suspect or confirmed measles**. HCPs can order N95 respirators and other PPE through the [Ontario PPE Supply Portal](#).

2. Consider measles in your differential diagnosis and test

Health care providers should remain alert to patients who present with the following key [symptoms](#) of measles:

- Fever ($\geq 38.3^{\circ}$ C) AND
- Cough/coryza/conjunctivitis AND
- Generalized maculopapular rash **and have recently traveled abroad and/or are unvaccinated**
- If your patient meets the above criteria, order the following tests:
 - [Measles PCR -nasopharyngeal \(NP\) /throat swab and urine specimen](#) - NP swab (pink-coloured medium) and urine (50 mls), for measles PCR AND
 - [Measles Serology](#) – blood test (IgG and IgM)
- Collect all specimens in your office to limit possible transmission elsewhere. Mark "suspect measles" on the lab requisition. It is imperative that the PCR tests are also ordered as the serology by itself is usually not sufficient to rule in or out measles in either vaccinated or unvaccinated patients.

3. Isolate

Promptly isolate any patient with suspect or confirmed measles in a single room with negative air flow (airborne infection isolation room), if available. If such a room is not available, please follow all measles [Infection Prevention and Control](#) recommendations including allowing ~2 hour of air exchange before another patient or unprotected staff enter the room.

4. Report

Immediately **report all suspect or confirmed cases** of measles infection to SMDHU at 705-721-7520 Extension 8809 during work hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday) or after hours 1-888-225-7851.

More information:

- [Measles Toolkit for Health Professionals – Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](#)
- [Measles Information for Clinicians \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)
- [CDC Travel Notices](#)