

February 10, 2025

From the office of Dr. Malcom Lock, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Grand Erie Public Health

Call to Action: Expanded Eligibility for Measles Vaccine

In response to the current community outbreak of measles and the continued spread in unvaccinated and under-vaccinated individuals in our regions, Grand Erie Public Health (GEPH) and Southwestern Public Health (SWPH), in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario, are advising the following updates to the publicly funded vaccination schedule for measles to take effect immediately:

For those who live, play, travel to, worship or otherwise, in the Grand Erie Public Health (GEPH) and Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) regions:

- Expanded eligibility for infants 6 months to 11 months of age
- Accelerated schedule for second doses in children under 4 years of age
- Second dose for adults born in and after 1970

EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY FOR INFANTS 6 MONTHS TO 11 MONTHS:

- To create additional protection for this highly vulnerable age group, an additional publicly funded dose of measles containing vaccine can now be provided to infants 6 months to 11 months of age.
- The use of MMR vaccine down to 6 months of age for infants at risk of measles exposure (in the setting of an outbreak-affected area or travel) is a long-standing off-label vaccine recommendation from the National Advisory Council on Immunization (NACI).
- Priorix® or MMRII® may be used interchangeably and are both safe to provide for 6mo and older.
- Two additional doses of measles containing vaccine must be administered after 12 months of age (and at least 28 days after the previous dose) to ensure long-lasting immunity to measles.

ACCELERATED SCHEDULE FOR SECOND DOSES:

- To increase immunization coverage among children and prevent complications from measles infection that are more common under the age of 5 years, the second dose of the measles-containing vaccine scheduled at 4-6 years of age should instead be provided as early as 28 days from the previous dose.

- At an interval of 28 days or beyond, the second dose is considered valid under the Immunization of School Pupils Act and effective to provide long-lasting immunity. An additional dose of measles-containing vaccine at 4-6 years would not be required.

SECOND DOSE FOR ADULTS BORN IN AND AFTER 1970:

- To further mitigate the risk of ongoing transmission in the community, adults born in and after 1970 with only one dose of measles-containing vaccine should be offered a second dose.
- Individuals born prior to 1970 in Canada are likely to have immunity as the result of being exposed to measles through natural infection.

CALL TO ACTION:

Achieving and maintaining vaccination coverage of at least 95% is necessary for herd immunity and to reduce the impact of isolated outbreaks (NACI). Grand Erie Public Health is putting out a call to action for community health care providers to support and implement the above immunization strategy to increase coverage and protection against measles in our region and mitigate the risk of onward transmission within the community. We ask that you actively review the immunization records for rostered patients and provide measles vaccinations for those currently without 2 doses.

Grand Erie Public Health will also be holding community clinics for measles vaccination in the coming weeks with a focus on daycare-to-school aged children in low coverage areas and individuals who may face barriers to accessing primary care.

For more information on the expanded eligibility for measles vaccines in Grand Erie Public Health communities, contact our Vaccine Preventable Diseases Team or visit our webpages:

Brantford-Brant: 519-753-4937 Ext. 445
www.bchu.org/professionals

Haldimand-Norfolk: 519-426-6170 Ext. 3214 or 905-318-6623 Ext. 3214
www.hnhu.org/partners