

Memo

To: Haldimand Norfolk Health Care Providers
From: Infectious Disease Team
Date: January 28, 2024
Re: Increase in measles cases worldwide – Measles Preparedness

Current Situation

- In December 2023, the World Health Organization reported an alarming 30-fold rise in measles cases in Europe.
- The Pan-America 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.
- 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 outbreak in Canada.

Action Required

With the recent measles activity in Ontario and international travel anticipated over March break, Ontario Health and Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) encourages [all health care providers](#) 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 containing 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 measles transmission should be immunized with one dose of MMR. Two additional doses are required 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 judgement.
- **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,
 - **request patients report any vaccines** they receive to HNHU. More information available on health unit website: hnhu.org - [Immunization Reporting](#)
 - **order vaccines, including MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)** through HNHU's [Requisition Form for Vaccines and Other Products](#)
 - **advise patients of the option to visit a health unit immunization clinic**. To book an appointment visit: [HNHU Immunization Clinics](#)
 - **include measles in your differential diagnoses**, particularly in returning travelers with respiratory symptoms.
 - Measles is a reportable disease, and any suspect cases should be promptly reported to the **health unit at 519-426-6170 ext. 3438; after hours 1-877-298-5888**.
 - 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](#).

Thank you for your continued diligence in working collaboratively with the health unit.

Best Regards,

Infectious Disease Team

Attachments Appendix A: Measles eCTAS

For questions, please contact our Infectious Disease Team at 519-426-6170 ext. 3438 or e-mail us at idt@hnhss.ca
For after hours and weekends, please contact on-call at 1-877-298-5888