

Measles Preparedness

Update to York Region health care providers as of February 5, 2025

There have been [two recent exposure events for measles in York Region](#). Measles outbreaks have also been declared in Southwestern Ontario and Grand Erie as of January 29, 2025. Due to a global increase in measles activity in 2024, Ontario measles cases are rising. Public Health Ontario (PHO) reported [81 measles cases](#) in 2024 and 2025.

Suspecting measles

Risk factors that may raise the index of suspicion for measles include incomplete vaccination status, recent travel history or recent attendance at an exposure event. Signs and symptoms of measles include:

- Fever, cough, rhinorrhea and conjunctivitis
- Koplik spots (Small red spots in the mouth with white or bluish-white centers)
- Morbilliform rash (Dusky red, blotchy rash that begins on the face and spreads all over the body)
 - Rash typically begins on the third to the seventh day of illness and lasts four to seven days

Infections can occur in individuals who are only partially vaccinated or even in those who are fully vaccinated. The signs and symptoms in these cases may be atypical or less pronounced.

Test and report suspected measles cases to York Region Public Health immediately

Follow the provincial guidelines on specimen collection and handling for any suspected measles cases. Please promptly perform **ALL** the diagnostic tests listed below. If index of suspicion is high, testing can be done beyond recommended time periods:

- **Urine for PCR testing:** Within 14 days of rash onset
- **Nasopharyngeal swab or throat swab for PCR testing:** Within 7 days of rash onset
- **Acute Serology (IgM and IgG):** Within 7 days of rash onset

To expedite the processing of specimens, please call York Region Public Health (YRPH) at 905-830-4444 ext. 73588, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or after hours at 905-953-6478. YRPH will help arrange transportation of specimens to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory (PHOL) in Toronto.

If you have a high degree of suspicion for a measles case, report it to YRPH Immediately. Measles is a reportable disease of public health significance under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#) (HPPA).

- Please call us at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588 (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or 905-953-6478 after hours (before 8:30 a.m. and after 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday or 24 hours per day on weekends/holidays)

Important: Please instruct your patient to isolate at home after leaving your clinical facility and that public health will contact them with further direction and support.

Infection prevention and control measures

For the recent exposure events, we are informing individuals who develop signs and symptoms to inform their health care provider of their exposure ahead of arrival to the clinic, allowing clinic staff to prepare:

- Patients with suspected measles should be **promptly isolated in a single room** with negative air flow (airborne infection isolation room or AIIR) and the door closed. If you do not have an AIIR, the patient should wear a surgical mask and be immediately placed in a single room with a closed door
- The measles virus can remain airborne for two hours. Therefore, **no other patients** should be placed in the same room for **two hours** afterwards. Patient movement should be limited unless absolutely required
- **Room cleaning and disinfection** are required when the patient leaves the clinical facility. Droplet and Contact Precautions are to be used for patients presenting with respiratory symptoms and/or undifferentiated viral symptoms
- **All** health care workers should have either two doses of documented measles immunization **OR** documented laboratory evidence of immunity. Only immune staff should care for a patient suspected of measles
- **All** health care workers should wear a fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirator when entering the room and/or caring for a patient with suspect and confirmed measles
- Additional information on infection prevention and control measures may be found [here](#)

Promote immunization among patients

- Please support patients in remaining up to date with all routine immunizations (including measles), especially in advance of any upcoming travel
- The routine immunization schedule for measles-containing vaccine is two-doses, once given at 12 months (MMR) and once given between 4 and 6 years old (MMRV)
 - Measles vaccine may be given to infants aged six to 11 months if travelling to areas where measles is circulating; however, two additional doses of measles-containing vaccine must be administered after the child is 12 months old to ensure long-lasting immunity to measles
 - Please see the [Ontario's Routine Immunization Schedule](#) for more information
- Encourage parents to [report](#) their children's immunizations to public health through the Immunization Connect Ontario Tool (ICON), so YRPH have the most up-to-date information

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Additional Resources

- PHO: [Measles Information for Clinicians](#)
- PHO: [Measles Serological Testing Information](#)
- PHO: [Measles Diagnostic PCR Testing information](#)
- PHOL: [Requisition for Specimen Containers and Supplies](#)
- PHO: [Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice](#)
- PHO: [Interim IPAC Recommendations and Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed Measles](#)
- [Measles Fact Sheet for Patients](#)