

Update on Measles Management and Prevention

Toronto Board of Health March 25, 2024

Measles is highly contagious; vaccination is the best protection

- Measles is a viral illness that spreads through the air causing a red rash, fever, cough, red watery eyes and tiredness; complications can be life threatening
- One infected person can infect 9 out of 10 unvaccinated close contacts
- Although measles is uncommon in Toronto and Ontario, there is a risk of a measles outbreak from international travel and lower vaccination rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- There is a rise in measles cases globally, including a number of cases identified in Toronto in 2024

TPH's role in management of measles cases

- If a measles case is identified or an outbreak is declared, TPH ensures testing and isolation for cases and contacts and coordinates with other public health agencies for response.



- Case classification
- Case isolation
- Client education
- Contact identification



- Risk assessment & Prioritization
- Screening
- Exclusion
- Post exposure prophylaxis and clinics
- Public communications and notifications

Measles is uncommon in Toronto

- There were 4 cases of measles identified in Toronto in 2023, and 1 in 2022. The 5-year average before the COVID-19 pandemic was 5 cases each year.
- In Toronto, cases of measles have been reported in 2024. So far they have been travel-related.

Measles vaccine status is required for school; measles vaccine is recommended for travel

- Measles vaccination is given on or after the first birthday. A second dose is given at 4 to 6 years of age.
 - Infants 6 to 11 months can receive 1 early additional dose if they are travelling
- Ontario's *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) requires that students be vaccinated against measles or have a valid exemption and report these to their local health unit
- People travelling should ensure they get vaccinated or are immune due to past infection

Measles vaccination rates decreased during COVID-19 but are increasing

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, measles vaccination rates were high
- Lower rates in elementary students after the pandemic are due to:
 - Missed second doses
 - Underreporting of vaccinations due to disruption of ISPA assessments

ISPA assessments are underway to increase measles protection

TPH ISPA Actions

Sept-Dec 2023

- Sent reminder letters to 7- and 17-year-olds (TCDSB and French school boards)

Jan-March 2024

- Issue suspension orders to non-compliant 7-year-olds (TCDSB, French boards)
- Provide vaccine catchup in high school and community clinics

April-May 2024

- Send reminder letters to 17-year-olds (TDSB)
- Plan 2024/2025 school year assessments

Sept-Nov 2024

- Issue suspension orders to non-compliant 7-year-olds (TDSB)
- Assess other cohorts

Enforcement of ISPA will increase reported measles vaccination rates

- Schools that move through the full ISPA assessment process show increased coverage rates

Promoting Measles Awareness and Prevention: Communications

- Raising awareness of measles vaccination before and after March break:
 - [News release](#)
 - Social media
 - Letters
 - Councillor communications
 - [Website updates](#)



TRAVELING SOON? STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH YOUR MEASLES VACCINES BEFORE YOU GO.

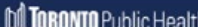
- 2 doses of the MMR vaccine is recommended for anyone born in 1970 or later
- Children get their 1st dose after they turn 1 & 2nd dose at 4-6 years old or sooner
- Infants 6-11 months of age can be vaccinated early if travelling
- Adults born before 1970 who are unsure they had measles or were vaccinated can get one MMR dose

 TORONTO Public Health toronto.ca/measles-fact-sheet



Returned from travel? Watch for measles symptoms.

- Measles is increasing and spreading in every region of the world
- It spreads through the air from person to person
- It can cause a fever, rash, cough, runny nose, red eyes, ear infections, pneumonia & sometimes death
- If you think you have measles, self-isolate & call your doctor or hospital for an assessment

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Centralized provincial vaccination registry recommended

- The best way to ensure comprehensive collection of vaccination data is to collect it when the vaccine is administered
- Toronto Public Health recommends a system that can be used by health care providers and all health units that will allow for easier and improved reporting.
- **The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:**
 - **The Board of Health, in light of the re-emergence of measles as a public health concern, reiterate its request to the Ministry of Health in Item 2022.HL36.3 to establish a provincial electronic immunization registry for all vaccines, which would enhance efforts to prevent and respond to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable infectious diseases.**