

April 10, 2017

Attention: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Hospitals - Emergency Rooms / Infection Control / Occupational Health, Walk-In Clinics, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, EMS, Corrections

RE: MEASLES IN ONTARIO

As of April 10, 2017, six confirmed cases of measles have been reported in Ontario. At this time, there are no confirmed cases locally. Five of the confirmed cases have been travel related. Halton Region Public Health is investigating a laboratory confirmed case that has had no travel exposure and immunization status is unknown.

We urge you to be vigilant and consider measles in both returning travellers and in individuals who have been in contact with a case of measles. Most cases of measles become apparent 10-14 days after contact with the virus (the range is 7-21 days). Most cases of measles occur among persons without adequate immunization. Although much less common, cases have been observed in individuals who have received two valid doses of measles-containing vaccine. Thus, a two-dose measles immunization history should not be used to rule out measles, and appropriate testing needs to occur in persons with illness compatible with measles. Measles is a highly infectious virus that spreads easily.

Signs and symptoms of measles include fever, runny nose, cough, drowsiness, irritability, soreness and redness of the eyes. A red blotchy rash appears on the 3rd to 7th day, beginning on the face and spreading down the body. A person with measles is infectious 4 days before and 4 days after the onset of the rash. Immunization is the best protection. Refer to the *Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario* for MMR vaccine recommendations http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/docs/immunization_schedule.pdf

REPORT SUSPECTED CASES OF MEASLES TO PUBLIC HEALTH IMMEDIATELY

Patients suspected to have measles should wear a mask and be placed in a separate room with the door closed when in a health care setting. Only immune staff should be allowed to enter the room. Non-immune staff may only enter the room in very exceptional circumstances, i.e., they are the only available health care provider who can care for the patient and then a fit-tested N95 mask must be worn.

Suspect cases should also be instructed to remain in isolation until contacted by public health. Because measles virus can remain airborne for two hours, no further patients should be placed within the room for a two hour period (this could be sooner dependent on the number of air exchanges). Appropriate room cleaning is also required. Patient movement should be curtailed unless absolutely necessary and then only conducted with the patient wearing a surgical mask.

Diagnostic Testing

Diagnostic laboratory testing is suggested for individuals who have a clinical syndrome and history compatible with measles and should include both measles virus detection (nasopharyngeal/throat swab and urine) and diagnostic serology (acute and convalescent).

The PHO Laboratories test information sheet provides comprehensive information on specimen collection and submission:

<http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Index.aspx?letter=M>

For information on testing for immunity to measles, please refer to

http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/servicesandtools/laboratoryservices/pages/measles_immunity_serology.aspx

Measles Update for Clinicians available on the Public Health Ontario website at:

http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Measles_Update_for_Clinicians.pdf

If you have additional questions, please call the Health Unit and ask to speak with a nurse in the Communicable Disease Control, Epidemiology and Evaluation Department.

NOTE: For easier access to the above web links, visit the Health Unit website (www.hkpr.on.ca) for electronic copies of all current – and previous – editions of *FAX Facts*. Go to the ‘Resources & Forms’ header at the top of the web page, and use the drop-down menu to click on the ‘Health Care Professionals’ section (a link to FAX Facts is posted there). A direct link is also provided below:

www.hkpr.on.ca/ResourcesForms/HealthCareProfessionals/FAXFacts.aspx

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