

Measles Update

Two measles cases were confirmed in the Lower Mainland on February 16, 2025 in under/unvaccinated travellers returning to BC. The resurgence in measles activity nationally is being driven by declining vaccination rates.

Vaccination is the Best Defense

Vaccination is very effective and long-lasting (85-95% after 1 dose, ~100% after 2 doses). A two-dose series is routinely provided at 12 months and at 4-6 years of age. 25% of 7-year olds are under/unvaccinated for measles.

MMR is publicly funded in BC. The following people are eligible for free MMR dose(s) (tinyurl.com/BCCDCMMR):

- Those born before January 1, 1970 (1957 for health care workers) are likely immune through prior infection.
- Those born on/after January 1, 1970 (1957 for healthcare workers) are eligible for 2 doses of measles vaccine in their lifetime
- Infants 6 -12 months old can receive an early extra dose if travelling to an area with active transmission

Patients can access their immunization records online (tinyurl.com/ImmsRec). **Patients can access vaccines at:**

- Children can be referred to any local health unit (tinyurl.com/healthunits)
- Adults can go to any health unit or community pharmacy that stocks MMR (tinyurl.com/MMRpharmacy)
- Family physicians, NPs, and other clinicians can order vaccines from Public Health to offer to their patients (tinyurl.com/ISLHVaccines)
- Vaccinations are provided routinely in schools for K, Gr. 6 & Gr 9, with extra clinics for Gr. 11 & 12 this year

The Assessing/Treating Physicians' Role: Is this Measles?

When to Consider Measles

In the absence of a local outbreak, it is unlikely that any patient has measles without **both** of the following:

- Under/unvaccinated AND born after 1969
- Travel in the last month OR contact with a known case

Signs/Symptoms:

- Descending maculopapular rash 3-7 days after a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza, conjunctivitis

Report to Public Health

All suspected cases must be reported to Public Health. If you are suspicious enough to test, or need a Public Health consult, please report to:

- South Island: 250-388-2225
- Central Island: 250-740-2615
- North Island: 250-331-8555
- Afterhours/weekends: 1-800-204-6166

Testing for Measles

Nucleic acid testing (RT-PCR):

- NP (preferred) or throat swab (COPAN red-top tube in UTM) **and** a urine sample

Complete req form (tinyurl.com/VirologyReq) and submit to Island Health Lab (preferred) or BCCDC.

If collecting serology (optional), select both IgM & IgG

In an outpatient setting, call the lab in advance for infection prevention instructions before going

Advice to Patients & Families

For suspected cases:

- Isolate/airborne precautions/negative pressure and await Public Health direction
- Seek urgent care if illness worsens (call ED in advance for precaution instructions)

For exposed contacts:

- Monitor for symptoms for 21 days from the last exposure
- If symptoms develop: isolate, seek testing and report to Public Health for further instruction

Island Health Medical Health Officers

Chief MHO: Dr. Réka Gustafson 250-519-3406; North Island: Dr. Charmaine Enns 250-331-8591

Central Island: 250-739-6304; Cowichan Region: 250-737-2020

South Island: Dr. Carol Fenton, Dr. Murray Fyfe, Dr. Dee Hoyano, Dr. Christina Kay, Dr. Mike Benusic 250-519-3406

islandhealth.ca/about-us/medical-health-officers