

Important information for parents and guardians

March 3, 2015

Measles (red measles, rubeola) in Ontario

Measles is currently spreading in Ontario. There are no cases of measles in Hamilton, so now is the time to protect yourself and your family.

Hamilton Public Health Services strongly encourages parents to fully vaccinate their children against measles.

About measles

- Measles is an infection of the lungs (respiratory system) that is caused by a virus
- It is easily spread from person to person
- Nine out of 10 unvaccinated people who come in close contact with an infected person with measles will get the disease
- Measles is a serious disease, 1 in 10 will develop complications, 1 in 1000 will die

Who is at risk?

- Anyone born in 1970 or after who has not had two doses of measles vaccine is more likely to catch it
- Children under one year of age, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems can get very sick with measles

Symptoms of Measles

- Fever of 38.3° C (101° F) or greater
- Cough
- Runny nose and red/watery eyes
- A red blotchy rash on the face begins on the third to seventh day and spreads to the rest of the body
- The rash will last between four to seven days
- Measles usually last for two weeks

How it is spread?

- Measles is spread easily through the air or through contact with droplets (fluid or mucus) from the nose and throat of infected persons

- The virus can stay in the air for long periods of time and infect others in the same room even after the person with measles has left the room
- People infected with measles can spread the disease to others four days before the rash appears and up to four days after the rash appears

How to prevent measles?

- Measles is preventable through vaccination with two doses of measles vaccine (MMR, MMRV)
- In children, the first dose is typically given at 12 months of age (MMR) and the second dose is given between the ages of four to six years (MMRV)
- Adults born 1970 or later should have 2 lifetime doses of measles vaccine given at least 28 days apart
- If you are unsure about the vaccinations you or your children have received, contact your doctor or nurse practitioner. If your doctor or nurse practitioner does not have a record of your vaccinations please call Public Health Services at 905-540-5250.

If you think you or your child may have signs and symptoms of measles:

- **Remain in your own home and do not go to any social and group gatherings**
- Call ahead and tell the doctor's or nurse practitioner's office about your or your child's symptoms and tell them if you have been in contact with a person who has measles.

To prevent spread to other people, you may be given the last appointment of the day, and when you arrive, you will be given a mask to wear.

To receive the measles vaccine, please contact your health care provider, or visit a walk-in clinic.

Please call the Infectious Disease Program at 905-540-6636 to speak with a Public Health Nurse regarding measles.