

Important information for parents and guardians of school-aged children

Measles Information

Measles in Niagara

Measles is circulating in Niagara and in other areas across the province. Anyone can catch it anywhere. As more cases are confirmed Niagara residents should be aware that measles can be in any community so the best protection for you and your family is to ensure your measles vaccination is up to date.

The following information can be found at www.niagararegion.ca/health:

- The most up-to-date information about measles activity
- General vaccination clinics
- Information about measles

Niagara Region Public Health strongly encourages all residents to have their measles vaccination up to date:

- For individuals born before 1970 and can confirm they have had the disease or have had one dose of MMR, no further vaccination is required at this time
- For individuals born in 1970 or after, two doses of the MMR vaccination is required to be considered adequately protected

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 unimmunized people who come in close contact with an infected person with measles will get the disease
- Measles is a serious disease, one in 10 will develop complications, one in 1,000 will die

Who is at risk (susceptible)?

- Anyone who has not had their age-appropriate vaccines
- Recommendations for vaccination include:
 - Children as per Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization vaccination schedule
 - Adults before 1970 with no evidence of previous measles illness and who have not had one dose of the measles vaccine
 - Adults born in 1970 or after who have not had two doses of measles vaccine

Note: Infants under one year of age, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems are more likely to get very ill 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 downward to the rest of the body
- The rash will last between four to seven days
- Measles usually lasts for two weeks

How is it spread?

- Measles is spread easily through the air or through contact with droplets from the nose and throat of an infected persons when they cough or sneeze
- Particles from an infected person can stay in the air for long periods of time and infect others in the same room or in neighbouring rooms
- 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

My child has developed symptoms. Who do I call?

- If you need medical attention , seek medical care but call ahead first to allow health care staff to manage your case appropriately
- If your child develops any of the symptoms listed above, call Public Health at 905-688-8248 ext. 7330 or 1-888-505-6074 or after hours at 905-984-3690 or 1-877-552-5579

General Information about the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*

What is the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*?

- The *Immunization of School Pupils Act* requires every Public Health unit to have either an up-to-date vaccination record or a legal exemption form on file for each child attending school.
- The Act ensures that children in Niagara are protected against vaccine preventable diseases
- Mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

What does “exclusion from school” mean?

- Susceptible students, meaning those without 2 doses of the measles vaccine, will be excluded from school **if they have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case**

What are the criteria for exclusion from school?

- When the Medical Officer of Health identifies an outbreak or an immediate risk of an outbreak of a reportable disease in the school where the student attends
- The student has not completed the required immunization schedule for the disease circulating

What is the purpose of exclusion from school?

- Exclusion is about protection and prevention
 1. It protects your child from getting the illness
 2. It prevents your child from spreading the illness

My child has been excluded from school. When can he/she return?

- Exclusion from school will remain in effect until either:
 - Public Health has received notification that the child has received the required immunizations for the disease circulating, OR
 - The risk of disease exposure and illness has subsided, as determined by the Medical Officer of Health

My child has the required vaccination, but I haven't reported it to Public Health. Who do I call?

- To report vaccination(s) please contact Public Health 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7309 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

I have questions about the exclusion process. Who do I call?

- If you require any further information about the exclusion process please call 905-688-8248 ext. 7309, or 1-888-505-6074 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.