

Protecting Your Practice Against Measles

Recommendations for York Region health care providers as of July 3, 2019

Recent measles cases have reminded us of the importance of not only protecting the public in the event of a case of measles, but also health care provider practices (including you and your staff). To best serve the public and protect our communities, we want to ensure you and your staff can remain functional and responsive to your patients' needs. The following recommendations can help prepare you in the event of a measles exposure in your practice, and will lessen the impact of measles on your health care practice.

Staff

- Ensure staff in your health care practice are immune to measles.
- The following is accepted as proof of measles immunity:
 - Documentation of receipt of two doses of measles-containing vaccine on or after the first birthday, with doses given at least four weeks apart, OR
 - Laboratory evidence of immunity (i.e., measles IgG reactive)

NOTE: If you are in doubt about whether someone received their measles vaccine doses, immunization with measles-containing vaccine is preferable to ordering serology to check immunity. This avoids the potential for false positive results, reduces the risk of missed opportunities for immunization, and is consistent with advice from the Canadian Immunization Guide. Vaccination is safe, and measles-containing vaccines help protect against waning immunity to other vaccine components, like mumps.

- Ensuring you and your staff are protected against vaccine preventable diseases (including measles) and ensuring proof of immunization/immunity information is readily available for you and your staff will help avoid disruption to your practice and assist with protecting patients and the public.
Following a known measles exposure within a health care setting, staff that do not have proof of measles immunity available may be excluded from work by Public Health in order to protect public safety.

Patients/Clients

- **If an individual's immunization records are unavailable, immunization with measles-containing vaccine is preferable to ordering serology to determine immune status.**
- For a patient presenting with measles-like symptoms, please make every effort to see the patient at the end of the day when other patients have left, if clinical status allows, to minimize exposure to others.
- Provide a surgical face mask for the patient to wear at all times while in all areas of the clinical office. For practices with a large paediatric component, paediatric masks are available for purchase.

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- Quickly triage the patient out of the common waiting areas and move the patient to an examining room. If possible, the patient should enter and exit through a separate entrance and go directly in and out of the examination room.
- Keep the door to the treatment/exam room closed. Visitors and staff should not enter the room unless they are immune to the disease. Open a window in the room, if possible.
- Place alert signage for staff on the closed door.
- An N95 respirator is not necessary if the health care provider has documented immunity to measles infection. Ideally, only immune staff should provide care to patients with suspected or confirmed measles.
- Allow sufficient time for the air to change in the room and be free of droplet nuclei before using the room for a non-immune patient (for measles). The time required may be minimized if the patient has worn a surgical mask consistently. Depending on factors such as air exchange, measles can remain in the air for up to **two hours** after the patient has left.
- Routine cleaning for the room or equipment is sufficient after examining a patient under airborne precautions.

Resources

Public Health Ontario - Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice

http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/IPAC_Clinical_Office_Practice_2013.pdf

Public Health Ontario – Important Measles Information

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles/important-measles-information>

Public Health Ontario – Measles

<http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/IDLandingPages/Measles.aspx>

Public Health Ontario – Measles Information for Clinicians

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/measles-information-clinicians.pdf>

US CDC's Measles Information for Health Professionals

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>

Contact Public Health

For more information on measles in York Region visit york.ca/healthprofessionals or call York Region Public Health's Control of Infectious Disease team at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588.