

ISC Alberta Region-Update for Chiefs

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) develops and delivers holistic approaches to social, healthcare and infrastructure services to our Indigenous partners by working collaboratively to improve access to high quality services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

March 21, 2025
edition #174

Measles Edition

Current Alberta Context

There are more confirmed cases of measles in Alberta.

There are confirmed measles cases in Alberta in the North Zone, Edmonton Zone and Calgary Zone of Alberta. A measles outbreak is ongoing in a northern Alberta community. In recent months there has been an increase in measles cases in other parts of Canada and the United States.

For information on the current cases and situation in the province, please click [here](#).

Measles is a serious viral illness. It is airborne and highly transmissible.

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases in the world and can lead to serious infection. Children under the age of five, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a weak immune system are most likely to get complications from measles infection.

Those who are not vaccinated or are only partially vaccinated for measles are most at risk for contracting the disease.

For information on all exposure locations in Alberta, please click [here](#).

Two doses of measles vaccine is 99% effective. Being vaccinated can prevent an infection and remove the requirement to isolate if exposed.

Join us to learn more!

Upcoming Telehealth Sessions (recordings will be available):



March 21 1:30 - 3:00 PM

Measles Outbreak: Current Status, Key Messaging and Information **for Health Care Professionals**

<https://fntn.zoom.us/j/85478084843> | Meeting ID: 854 7808 4843 | Passcode: 329295

Please select "join meeting as an Attendee", once logged-in



March 24 1:30 - 3:00 PM

Measles Outbreak: Current Status, Key Messaging and Information **for Everyone**

<https://fntn.zoom.us/j/89163503862> | Meeting ID: 891 6350 3862 | Passcode: 241394

Please select "join meeting as an Attendee", once logged-in



People who were born before 1970 (turning 56 this year, or older) have likely had measles disease as a child, so they are considered protected, *



People who have had lab-confirmed measles disease in the past are protected,

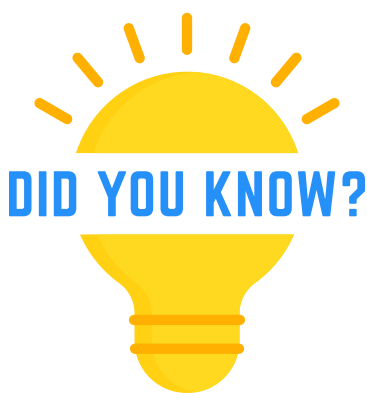


People who have had a blood test showing evidence of immunity are protected,



People who have documentation of two doses (given more than 1 month apart) of measles-containing vaccine (given on or after one year of age) are protected.

***All people who work in health care settings (no matter what job they have, or how old they are) need to have two doses of measles vaccine, even if they were born before 1970. This is because people who work in a health care facilities have a higher risk of exposure. Having vaccine gives them more protection, as well as protect the people they serve.**



DID YOU KNOW?

Individuals can find out if they, their children, and their families are vaccinated by:

- **Contacting their health centre**
- **Calling Health Link at 811**
- **Texting “vaccine record” to 88111**
- **More information can be found at the Alberta Health [measles website](#).**

If you have questions, call your health centre.



Question:

What's the difference between a measles **case** and a measles **contact**?

Answer:

A measles case is a person who is infected with the measles virus. They can spread that virus to others from **four days before their rash starts to four days after the rash starts**.

A measles contact is a person identified through contact/exposure site tracing who may have been exposed to measles.

People who have been around a contact are not at risk of infection unless that contact becomes a case.

Question:

What happens if you are a measles contact?

Answer:

Anyone who is fully immunized or who has protection to measles infection (as outlined on page two) can continue their regular activities, even if they are exposed to someone with measles.

Anyone who is exposed to the measles virus and who is not protected against it will be called by a public health nurse. For people contacted within a few days of their exposure, getting vaccine quickly, or immune globulin treatment for high-risk individuals, can help prevent disease. People who are exposed and not protected, who have declined post-exposure immune globulin or a vaccine, or who received the vaccine outside the recommended timeframe, will need to stay home and avoid contact with other people for 21 days from the last time they had a measles exposure.

Everyone exposed to measles should watch for measles symptoms and should call the health centre if they have any of these.



Question:

What are the symptoms of measles?

Answer:

Initial symptoms of measles include:

- Fever
- Red and watery eyes
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Tiny white spot inside the cheeks (Koplik Spots)

Following this, a rash appears three to seven days after the symptoms start. The rash looks like red spots and starts on the face and upper neck. This rash then spreads down to the rest of the body, including hands and feet. The rash lasts another four to seven days.



Prevention in Action

“I think I might have measles. What should I do?”

If you or your child are showing symptoms of measles, **stay at home, avoid contact with others**, and call your health centre or Health Link at 811 before visiting any hospital, clinic, or healthcare provider. It is important to not visit the health centre before calling, as you may put others at risk. **If it's an emergency, do go to the health centre as normal, but advise the nurses and other staff about your symptoms.**

Tournaments and gatherings: Let's share memories, not measles

As spring break approaches, along with regular weekend activities, there will be more and more occasions where people are travelling to gather, whether it be for hockey tournaments or community events. These settings provide ideal conditions for largescale spread of measles. During these events, we encourage communities and coordinators to **promote precautionary measures to help reduce spread of infection including washing hands, covering coughs, not sharing utensils and water bottles and staying home when sick.**

Event organizers may wish to consider **advising attendees and participants to check if they are protected against measles.**

Event organizers should also **keep attendance records to assist in contact tracing, should a case of measles occur.**



“I think I've been exposed to measles. What should I do?”

If you suspect that you have been exposed to a confirmed case of measles, you should check your immunization history. See [page two](#) for details on who is considered immune to and protected from measles.

It can take seven to 21 days after being exposed for symptoms to appear. If you become ill, contact your health centre. Do not visit in person before calling, as you may put others at risk.



Protecting children in schools and daycares: healthy practices

Hygiene practices play a big role in keeping schools and daycares safe. Encourage children, students, fellow staff and visitors to:

- **stay home from school when not feeling well**
- **wash their hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer**
- **place used tissues into a waste basket and then perform hand hygiene**
- **cough or sneeze into their elbow, or wear a mask to limit spread**
- **not share water bottles, lipstick, lip balm or drinks**

Schools, daycares, and community gathering spaces should also clean more frequently with disinfectant cleansers, paying extra attention to high touch surfaces like doorknobs, children's toys, light switches and washrooms.

Further Reading and Resources

Information sources

[Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on the Increase in Measles Cases and the Risk to People in Canada - Canada.ca](#)

[Measles - myhealth.alberta.ca](#)

[Measles vaccine - Indigenous Services Canada](#)

[Immunize Canada - measles webpage](#)

[Global Measles Notice - Travel.gc.ca](#)



The Alberta measles page is being updated daily at 12:30 PM. To access this information, click [here](#).



Health Promotion

ISC - Measles Vaccine: Protect your children. Protect yourself. Protect your community. ([poster](#))

ISC-AB - Share Memories Not Measles ([poster](#))

ISC-AB - Measles is Extremely Contagious ([poster](#))

ISC-AB - Do you suspect you have measles? ([poster](#))

ISC-AB - Stop the Spread! Measles is extremely contagious ([poster](#))

Vaccine Hesitancy

[Dealing with needle pain and fear](#)

[Ask a scientist: What do I do if I'm scared of needle pain?](#)

Mental Wellness Resources

First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:

1.855.242.3310 or www.hopeforwellness.ca

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to First Nations, Inuit, and Peoples seeking emotional support, crisis intervention, or referrals to community-based services

Alberta Health Services Indigenous Support Line:

1.844.944.4744

Connecting Indigenous callers with Indigenous listeners 12pm-8pm, Monday to Friday.

Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic:

1.888.342.4822

Serves individuals self-identifying as First Nations, Inuit and Métis and their immediate family members.

