

Measles Outbreak in Vancouver

On February 8th, we informed you about a case of measles in a returning traveller. We are currently experiencing a measles outbreak in Vancouver related to a second importation of the measles. Most affected cases attend Jules Verne Secondary School. At this time, 4 lab confirmed and 5 epidemiologically linked clinical cases of measles have been identified, all in school aged children. Other residents of VCH may have been exposed to the disease in a variety of public locations between January 17th and February 14th. We ask that physicians remain vigilant for further clinical cases of measles. Measles initially presents with a fever, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis, which is then followed a few days later by a red maculopapular rash. The rash begins in the hairline and spreads rapidly to the face, trunk and limbs. Koplik spots, if present, fade as the rash appears.

If you suspect that you have a patient presenting with measles, please immediately notify the Medical Health Officer at 604-675-3900 (After hours: 604-527-4893) and take the following steps:

- 1) Promptly isolate patients with suspect measles.** Measles is airborne and highly infectious. To protect others in the office, please provide the patient with potential measles with a surgical mask and place them in a private room immediately. Importantly, the exam room should not be used for two hours after the patient has left. Suspect cases will need to stay isolated at home until four days after rash onset.
- 2) To confirm the diagnosis,** please collect a viral nasopharyngeal or throat swab (using a COPAN red top swab) and collect a urine sample for measles virus detection. Collection of blood for serologic testing is also advised (request testing of measles IgG and IgM; mark as 'ACUTE measles').

Please take this opportunity to immunize against measles. Two doses of MMR vaccine are recommended for patients born after January 1, 1970; those born before that date are considered to be immune. Health care workers born between 1957 and 1969 are recommended to have two doses of MMR vaccine. It is safe to immunize patients who are uncertain about their measles immunization history.

We are not currently recommending early vaccination of children aged 6-12 months. To date, all cases have occurred among school aged children and their family members. For this reason, we do not believe that early immunization is currently necessary but this recommendation could change if we see wider transmission in our community.

You can reach a Medical Health Officer in Vancouver at 604.675.3900 Toll free at 1.855.675.3900
For public health emergencies after hours contact the Medical Health Officer on call at 604.527.4893

Vancouver Medical Health Officers
Dr. Patricia Daly (Chief Medical Health Officer)
Dr. Réka Gustafson, Dr. John Harding, Dr. Althea Hayden, Dr. James Lu

To receive Physicians' Updates by email please contact us at: vchregistrationcdc@vch.ca