



**Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
Public Health**

300 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3B 3M9

August 27, 2025

Re: Important Measles Information for Back to School

Dear Parents/Guardians and Caregivers:

We are sharing this information as the school year begins so you are aware of the current situation and can take steps to protect yourself, your family and your community. Canada continues to experience the largest measles outbreak since measles was declared eliminated in Canada in 1998. As of August 9, 2025, 4,638 measles cases, including one death in a child, have been reported in Canada. Over 90% of cases are unimmunized or have unknown vaccination status.

As of August 9, 2025, 182 measles cases have been reported in Manitoba. Of these cases, eleven have been hospitalized, one of whom was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU). All of the cases who were hospitalized or admitted to ICU due to measles were unimmunized children, over 90% of them under the age of 10.

What is measles?

Early symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes, followed several days later by a red, blotchy rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. **Someone with measles can spread it to others from four days before the rash begins (before they know they have measles) to four days after the rash appears.**

Measles can be very serious, especially for young children, pregnant people, and people with a weakened immune system. It can cause severe lung and brain infections requiring hospitalization, and death. Vision loss and hearing issues are possible long-term consequences of measles.

How can I protect my child(ren) and my community from measles?

Measles spreads very easily. Immunization is the best way to protect your child(ren) from it. Two doses of measles vaccine are almost 100% effective in preventing a measles infection. It is still possible for a small number of vaccinated people to get measles, but the infection is usually milder, and they are less likely to spread the disease to others.

The full list of eligibility criteria for the measles-containing vaccines in Manitoba can be found at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html>.

It is especially important to be up to date on all vaccines, as Manitoba has recently seen higher numbers of other severe vaccine-preventable diseases, like meningococcal disease and pertussis. High immunization coverage rates also protect those people in the community who cannot get vaccinated, such as young infants, pregnant people, and people who have a weakened immune system.

You can check your child(ren)'s immunization records by contacting your health care provider, pharmacy, or local public health office (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html>) or by submitting a request online: <https://forms.gov.mb.ca/immunization-update-request/>.

If you suspect you or your child may have measles:

- Please call your health care provider or call Health Links – Info Santé (toll-free in Manitoba at 204-788-8200 in Winnipeg or 1-888-315-9257 outside Winnipeg) and get their advice on next steps. Call ahead before visiting any healthcare facility to let them know you may have measles. This will allow them to take precautions, such as wearing a mask and putting you in a room right away to prevent exposing other people.
- It is important to be tested if your health care provider thinks you have measles. Public health will contact you if your child is diagnosed with measles and take steps to prevent the spread of disease to others. If people are exposed and not protected from measles, there are interventions to prevent measles if they are notified quickly, which are particularly important if they are at risk of serious disease.
- After seeing a healthcare provider, stay home and away from public places including school and childcare facilities until you receive further advice. This helps protect others in the school and community.

What happens if there is an exposure to measles at school or child care facility?

If a child is not immunized and has been exposed to measles, follow Public Health's advice on how long to stay home to prevent further spread.

- **Your child(ren) may be required to stay home for at least three weeks after being exposed.** But this may be extended if more measles cases are identified in the school or child care facility.
- Your child(ren) could receive a dose of a measles-containing vaccine. Some children may be able to return to school or child care after they receive one dose of vaccine.
- Any child who has been excluded from school or child care facility needs to remain at home. Avoid public spaces, regular activities, and anyone who is at high risk of complications (e.g. pregnant women, infants, those with weakened immune systems).

If a child is immunized against measles, they are very unlikely to get measles after being exposed and can continue regular activities but should still monitor for symptoms.

Information on measles exposure locations in the community and what to do if exposed are posted on the Measles webpage: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/measles.html>.

Sincerely,

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