

February 21, 2019

Re: Measles Outbreak in Vancouver

Dear Students, Faculty, and Parents,

We are writing to provide you with an update regarding the measles outbreak in Vancouver. This outbreak has caused understandable concern within the school community. Eight cases of measles have been identified in school age children in Vancouver. All cases have been in students and families attending Jules-Verne, Rose-des-Vents, and Ann-Hebert schools. Students attending other schools have not been exposed and there is no evidence of measles transmission into the wider community.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that spreads through the air. It starts with fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. These symptoms develop between 7 to 21 days after a person is exposed. A characteristic rash then develops, beginning on the face and spreading down the body.

Most people in Canada are protected against infection through immunization with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. According to the BC immunization schedule, children receive MMR at 12 months of age followed by a second dose before 6 years of age. **Two doses of MMR vaccine are 99% effective at preventing measles.** If your child is up to date for their age we are not recommending early vaccination unless you will be travelling to a country outside of Canada with a high incidence of Measles disease. MMR vaccine is available through your local public health unit. Your local pharmacy and family doctor may also have the vaccine available.

To protect you and your family from measles, we recommend the following:

- If you were born on or after January 1st, 1970 and have not had two doses of measles vaccine, you should receive a dose of MMR vaccine.
- If you were born on or after January 1st, 1970 and are unsure of your immunization history and unable to locate your records, we recommend that you get a dose of MMR vaccine.
- If you were born before 1970, or have had measles, you are most likely immune. However, if you believe that you did not have measles infection, it is safe to receive a dose of vaccine.

There is no reason to believe that you or your child has been exposed to measles during this outbreak. However, the best way to protect you and your family from future measles exposures is to receive the MMR vaccine in accordance with the above guidelines. Please don't hesitate to call a Public Health Nurse at 604.983.6700 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mark Lysyshyn, MD, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health, North Shore