

February 23, 2015

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Re: How to Protect Your Child Against Measles

In recent weeks a number of confirmed measles cases have been reported in Ontario. One of these cases is an adult who lives in York Region.

Though the risk to the general public related to this case is considered to be low, measles is a highly infectious disease and 95 per cent of the community needs to have immunity to prevent its spread. This applies to schools and is why York Region Public Health urges you to review your child's immunization record and to get them vaccinated if two doses of the Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine have not been received.

What is Measles?

Measles is a very contagious infection that is easily spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can remain in the air for up to two hours after someone with measles has left the room.

The symptoms of measles develop approximately one to three weeks after exposure and include fever, cough, red watery eyes, and a red blotchy rash. Complications of measles can include ear infections, pneumonia, inflammation of the brain and death.

Check Your Child's Immunization Record

Vaccination with MMR vaccine is the best protection against measles. Every student in a York Region school should have received two doses of MMR vaccine after their first birthday, separated by at least 28 days

If your child does not have two doses of MMR vaccine, make an appointment with your family doctor for the shot. The vaccine is available **free-of-charge**. Take the opportunity to also ensure all of your child's vaccinations are up-to-date.

For More Information about Measles

A measles fact sheet is attached. If you have further questions on measles, immunizations or any public health related issue, please visit www.york.ca or contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY: 1-866-252-9933. Regular business hours are Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sincerely,



Leanne MacFarlane, RN, BScN
Acting Manager, Control of Infectious Diseases



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