Measles outbreak declared in Calgary, Central and Edmonton Zones of Alberta Health Services

CALGARY – Following several consecutive weeks in which new cases of measles disease have been confirmed in the Calgary, Central and Edmonton Zones of Alberta Health Services (AHS), AHS has declared a measles outbreak in these three Zones. At this time, the outbreak declaration does not apply to the North or South Zones of AHS.

Though the work undertaken by AHS on routine basis, related to measles cases, does not change as a result of this declaration, Albertans are advised of the following changes to the routine childhood immunization schedule recommendations, specifically as they apply to Calgary, Central and Edmonton Zones, for the duration of this outbreak.

Effective immediately:

- Infants six months of age to less than 12 months of age who are living in or travelling to the Calgary, Central or Edmonton Zones of AHS, or travelling to any out-of-province destinations in which measles outbreaks are ongoing, are eligible for an early additional dose of measles vaccine. Infants who receive this additional early dose of vaccine will still be required to receive the two routinely recommended doses of measles vaccine, administered at 12 months of age and between four and six years of age. This additional early dose will provide short-term added protection to infants six months to less than 12 months of age, who are otherwise vulnerable during this time of increased risk of exposure to disease.

- Children age four and older, who are attending daycares/dayhomes and schools within the Calgary, Central or Edmonton Zones of AHS and have not yet received their second dose of measles vaccine, are advised to receive it as soon as possible. In non-outbreak circumstances, the routine childhood immunization schedule suggests the second dose be received anytime between four and six years of age. During an outbreak, ensuring children attending daycares/dayhomes and schools have received this second dose as soon as possible will reduce the likelihood of these children being excluded from these locations following exposure to disease.

Please note: children who have already received both doses of measles vaccine, as per the routine immunization schedule, do not require any additional doses of vaccine.

In addition to the above changes to immunization recommendations, AHS continues to advise all Albertans to ensure they are up-to-date on all immunizations, including measles vaccine. Individuals born in or after 1970 require two documented doses of measles vaccine, to be protected.

Across Alberta, measles vaccine is always offered, free of charge, through Alberta’s publicly-funded immunization program. Measles vaccine continues to be available by appointment through local public health offices/community health centres, in all Zones. Over the coming days and weeks, AHS will advise public in each Zone if and as additional opportunities for immunization are planned, within that Zone. This information would also be posted to the AHS Measles webpage - www.albertahealthservices.ca/measles.
Albertans uncertain about their immunization history, or their child’s immunization history, are reminded to contact their local public health office or Health Link Alberta (1.866.408.5465) to discuss immunization needs.

For more information on measles disease in Alberta, visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/measles or call Health Link Alberta (1.866.408.5465).

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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