

Public Health

February 8, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

**SUBJECT: MEASLES OUTBREAK IN WASHINGTON STATE, UNITED STATES**

This alert is to inform you of a measles outbreak declared on January 18, 2019 in Washington State. To date, there have been 50 confirmed cases of measles. Ongoing updates about this outbreak are available at: <https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/measles-investigation>. While there have been no reported cases of measles in Alberta so far this year, patients may present with pre-travel concerns, or questions about symptoms upon return from Washington State.

**Pre-travel Concerns:** Two doses of a measles containing vaccine (MMR-V, MMR) at the appropriate ages and intervals, or a history of lab-confirmed disease, are required to be protected from contracting measles. Two doses of MMR vaccine confer 99% protection against measles. Please encourage your patients have their immunizations up to date prior to traveling to Washington State.

Children aged 6 months to 11 months, travelling to the affected area, are eligible for an earlier dose than the routine schedule. Similarly, children travelers 12 months of age and older with only one dose of measles containing vaccine, may receive their second dose of measles containing vaccine prior to their regularly scheduled 4-6 year old dose.

**Please encourage your patients to contact their local public health centre or Health Link (8-1-1) to determine if they need vaccine prior to travel, and to make an appointment to receive the immunization if required.**

**Post-travel Concerns:** Please notify Public Health if you have a patient returning from Washington State within the previous 21 days presenting with the following signs and symptoms: fever 38.3° C or higher, AND cough, coryza or conjunctivitis AND generalized maculopapular rash. **Symptomatic patients should be advised to stay home with no visitors for 4 days after the rash onset.**

**All suspected/confirmed cases of measles must be immediately reported to the South Zone Medical Officer of Health on-call by calling: 403-388-6111 (Chinook Regional Hospital) or 403-529-8000 (Medical Hat Regional Hospital).**

**Laboratory testing:** If measles is suspected, please order the following tests on a ProvLab requisition. Note the date of symptom onset, any recent travel and measles vaccination history on the requisition. Please **notify the laboratory in advance** so that the patient can be masked and isolated appropriately on arrival.

Blood	Serology for measles IgM and IgG
Urine	For measles virus culture/PCR
NP Swab	For measles culture/PCR (in viral/universal transport medium [pink liquid])

**Infection Control Recommendations:** Measles is highly communicable from person to person via the airborne route from about one day prior to onset of prodromal period until four days after appearance of rash. Make sure that you and your staff are immune to measles. **All staff should have two documented doses of measles vaccine (regardless of year of birth), OR measles IgG positive serology, OR lab evidence of measles disease.**

It is best to see patients with fever and rash that could be measles, at the end of the day, and in a private room with a door, to limit potential exposures at your clinic. Providing a procedure mask to symptomatic patients can help reduce spread to others. Any room the client has occupied should be left with the door closed and should not be used for two hours after a potential case has left the room to allow any virus suspended in the air to settle. Likewise, a routine cleaning of the examination room, prior to re-use, is advised.

Thank you for your continuing collaboration in the preventing the spread of disease and improving the health of our population.