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**HIGH PRIORITY
HEALTH ALERT**

November 27, 2024

From the Office of Dr. Joyce Lock, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

Measles update for the Southwestern Public Health region

Summary: Southwestern Public Health is investigating one new lab-confirmed case of measles that carries the risk of exposure in a healthcare setting. The health unit is also investigating a second health care exposure related to a probable case of measles. The cases are not epi-linked to each other, indicating local transmission.

A New Lab-Confirmed Case

Southwestern Public Health is investigating one lab-confirmed case of measles in the region. It is unknown whether this new case is linked to the cluster of travel-related measles reported in early November. The individual is an unimmunized child who is currently hospitalized.

Healthcare Setting Exposures

Southwestern Public Health is currently investigating and following up with known contacts who may have been exposed to the measles virus in the following settings:

- November 23, 2024, between 9:00PM and November 24, 2024, at 2:36AM at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital – Emergency Department
- November 21, 2024, between 2:30PM and 5:30PM at the Aylmer Ultrasound and Aylmer Family Dental clinics located at 418 Talbot Street West, Aylmer

ACTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:

- For patients that report a possible exposure to measles, ensure they are up-to-date with their measles vaccinations (2 doses of measles-containing vaccine) and monitor for symptoms for up to 21 days from the last exposure;
- Assess whether exposed infants under 12 months of age and/or pregnant and/or immunocompromised patients are eligible for immunoglobulin;
- Immunize patients who are not up-to-date and eligible for a dose of measles-containing vaccine;
- Complete diagnostic testing, counsel patient(s) to isolate and report to public health any suspect case of measles (i.e., symptoms compatible with measles; symptomatic contact).

- Follow [Measles: Information for Health Care Providers](#) for patients seeking medical care following an exposure to measles, or with measles like symptoms; AND
- Report any exposures or any suspect cases of measles to SWPH immediately.

If you are investigating a suspect case of measles, isolate the patient as soon as possible and report it to Southwestern Public Health immediately.

DO NOT WAIT for [laboratory confirmation](#) of measles.

TO REPORT: Call 1-800-922-0096 ext. 3500 // After Hours ext. 0

CLINICAL SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

Diagnostic Testing

Diagnostic laboratory testing is essential for all suspected measles cases and should include both measles virus detection by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) (swab AND urine), as well as diagnostic serology.

Ensure your office has testing specimen containers/ supplies available for testing. Check the expiry dates on the specimen containers and swabs. Kits can be ordered from [PHOL](#) (kit #390082 & kit #390081).

Collect the following specimens if you are investigating a suspect measles case:

- **Measles Virus Detection by PCR:**
- Nasopharyngeal swab (NP) AND/OR throat swab obtained within 7 days of rash onset. Specimens should be collected using the Viral Transport Medium (VTM) (pink liquid medium) collection kit; AND
- Urine: Minimum of 50 mL collected within 14 days of rash onset; AND
- **Diagnostic serology:** A blood specimen (5 mL collected in a serum tube) for measles antibodies (IgM and IgG) should be collected at the first visit (ideally within 7 days of rash onset)

Each specimen must have a separate **Public Health Ontario Lab Requisition**.

On the requisition clearly mark "Suspect Case of Measles" and Test Requested "Measles Diagnostic PCR".

Include symptoms, date of onset, exposure history (if known) and vaccination history (if known).

Label each specimen biohazard bag with PHOL to ensure transport to the correct lab.

Contact the Public Health Ontario (PHO) Laboratories customer service at 416-235-6556 or 1-877-604-4567 if you have any questions.

Resources:

- [Refer to the November Measles Alert for additional clinical support.](#)
- [Measles: Information for Health Care Providers \(Public Health Ontario, September 2024\)](#)

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