

Measles Guidance for Child Care Providers

Date: August 5, 2025

As measles continues to spread across British Columbia, childcare providers are advised to take proactive steps to help protect the health of children and staff. **The risk of getting measles is extremely high for those who are not immune and exposed**, while among those who are immune (e.g., through immunization) the risk of getting measles is extremely low.

The best way to protect children and staff is to have received measles-containing vaccine – currently in the form of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) or Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella (MMRV) vaccine – as appropriate for age. In British Columbia, measles-containing vaccine is offered:

- At 12 months of age in the form of MMR vaccine; and
- Between 4-6 years of age in the form of MMRV vaccine

One dose of measles-containing vaccine is around 85-95% protective, while the effectiveness of two doses approaches 100%.

People are considered fully immune to measles if they have any of:

- Had two doses of a measles-containing vaccine
- Were born before 1970 (immune due to presumed infection at a time when measles was circulating widely), or
- Previous laboratory evidence of immunity (antibody levels or presence of the virus)

Symptoms of measles include

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red and inflamed eyes, often sensitive to light

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- Rash starting on the face and neck, spreading to the chest, arms, and legs (lasting 4-7 days)
 - Small white spots inside the mouth

Symptoms can start between 7 and 21 days after a person is infected (i.e., exposed) with the measles virus. Measles can also lead to very serious complications like pneumonia, brain swelling (encephalitis), subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (a neurologic disorder that occurs many years after infection), and death. Finally, measles causes the immune system to not work as well for many years after infection, making the person more prone to other infections.

In the event of an exposure, children and staff without proof of immunity could be required to stay home from the childcare facility for up to 21 days from the date of exposure. Therefore, ensuring people's immunity status is recorded in advance will help ensure the safety of everyone and minimize disruptions to the childcare experience.

Indigenous families have often experienced unjust and racist treatment within the health care system. These experiences can deeply influence how individuals and communities engage with public health efforts, including conversations around measles and immunizations. It is essential to approach these discussions with respect, empathy, and cultural sensitivity, recognizing the historical and ongoing impacts of systemic racism.

How to be prepared for measles:

- The best way to be prepared for measles is to check if children and staff are up-to-date for measles vaccines for their age.
- Please remind staff and children's parents/caregivers that measles is currently circulating in parts of British Columbia. It is important that no one attend daycare if they are ill with any symptoms of measles. You can check current case counts by health authority on the [BCCDC website](#).
- Keep updated contact lists for all staff and children and have a mechanism of communicating to children's parents/caregivers and staff in the event of a measles case.

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- **Collect and maintain immunization records for all children** (this is a requirement of the Child Care Licensing Regulation).
 - Remind staff they should be aware of their measles immunity status as this can help prevent the need to stay home and miss work.
 - Provide information to children's caregivers and staff on measles prevention, including information on immunization (e.g., at what ages measles vaccine is recommended, how to access measles vaccine, etc.)
 - **Note:** Early 1st (before 12 months) and 2nd dose (before 4 years of age) of measles-containing vaccine is not routinely recommended for children but can be considered if someone is traveling to an area where measles is spreading.
 - [People can find out how to check their immunization records here](#), including how to check records on [Health Gateway](#) and how to [upload their immunization records](#) to the immunization registry. If immunization records are not available, the best approach is to get vaccinated. Getting additional measles-containing vaccines is completely safe and a blood test (serology) is not recommended for assessment of immunity.
 - Remind staff and children's parents/caregivers that if measles does occur in the daycare and someone is not immune, they may need to stay home for up to 21 days as determined by public health.
 - If appropriate (e.g., developmentally appropriate and safe for the child), consider having a designated room to isolate a child who has symptoms of measles if they develop symptoms while at daycare. This room will need to remain vacant for at least two hours after the person with suspected measles leaves, as measles can remain in the air for that long.
 - If possible, have face masks of varying sizes (including children's sizes) to use for both the affected individual and any staff (see below for further information on masking).
 - During staff training, include information about measles symptoms, monitoring staff and children for these symptoms, and letting a supervisor know if symptoms develop.

Symptom and exposure reporting:

- Ask staff and children's parents/caregivers to report if they have any symptoms of measles.
 - If people do report any symptoms, please advise them to stay home if they are not at daycare. If measles is suspected or confirmed, people should stay home for 4 days after rash appears or for 10 days from symptom onset if there is no rash. Please connect with your healthcare provider or HealthLink (8-1-1) for further guidance.
- Ask staff and children's parents/caregivers and staff to notify the daycare of any potential measles exposures among susceptible (non-immune) individuals that may have occurred outside the daycare setting.
 - If there was a known exposure to measles, even if no symptoms are present, please contact public health and do not attend daycare.

In the event you suspect measles in a child or staff member at your daycare:

- Give the person a face mask that covers their mouth and nose (if appropriate based on their age).
 - Children under the age of 2 should not wear masks, children between the ages of 2 and 5 and those older than 5 with support needs may be able to wear a mask with supervision, while children older than 5 should generally be able to wear a mask.
- The person with symptoms should go home as soon as possible:
 - Staff with measles symptoms to go home (see above "Symptom and exposure reporting" for duration and further guidance on who to contact with questions).
 - If appropriate (e.g., developmentally appropriate and safe for the child), move a child with measles symptoms to a separate room and contact parents/caregivers to pick them up as soon as possible.
 - Any staff interacting with a child who might have measles should also wear a face mask and be immune to measles – a susceptible (non-immune) person should not interact with someone who may have measles.

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- Contact your local health unit (information below) as soon as possible if measles is suspected – they can provide further information on isolation, testing, care, and transport.
 - Seek emergency care if necessary (e.g., someone is experiencing trouble breathing). If seeking medical care, please notify emergency transport and the healthcare facility in advance of your possible concern for measles so they can take appropriate precautions.

Where to find more information:

- Visit HealthLink BC for [general information about measles](#) or call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1.
- Additional [resources on measles](#) are available from First Nations Health Authority
- Guidance on [hand hygiene is available here](#).
- Guidance on [how to wear a mask is available here](#).
- If you suspect someone may have measles at your facility, you can call public health for further information and guidance.
 - **Fraser Health:** 604-507-5484
 - **Interior Health:** Contact your closest [Public Health Unit or local Health Centre](#)
 - **Island Health:**
 - South Island: 1-866-665-6626
 - Central Island: 1-866-770-7798
 - North Island: 1-877-887-8835
 - **Northern Health:** 1-844-645-7811
 - **Vancouver Coastal Health:**
 - Business hours: 1-855-675-3900
 - After business hours: 604-527-4893