

# Measles Prevention at Summer Camps

Date: July 3, 2025

As measles continues to spread across British Columbia, summer camps are advised to take proactive steps to help protect the health of campers and staff. **The risk of getting measles is extremely high among those who are not immune and exposed**, while among those who are immune to measles (see below for who is considered immune) the risk of getting measles is extremely low.

The best way of protecting staff and campers is to **ensure they have two doses of measles-containing vaccine** – either in the form of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) or Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella (MMRV) vaccine. People are considered immune to measles if they have two doses of measles-containing vaccine, were born before 1970 (immune due to presumed infection at a time when measles was circulating widely), or have previous laboratory evidence of immunity.

Symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, and red and inflamed eyes that are often sensitive to light. These symptoms are followed by a rash, which starts first on the face and neck, and spreads to the chest, arms and legs. The rash lasts about 4 to 7 days. There may also be 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), and even death.

In the event of an exposure, staff or campers without proof of immunity could be excluded from camp for up to 21 days from the date of exposure, so ensuring people's immunity status is recorded in advance will help ensure the safety of everyone at camp and minimize disruptions to the camp experience.

## Before Camp Begins:

- Remind staff and camper's parents/guardians that measles is circulating in British Columbia, and no one should attend camp if they are ill with any symptoms of measles. You can check current case counts by health authority on the [BCCDC website](#).
- Remind staff and camper's parents/guardians that they should ensure they have proof of immunity to measles prior to starting camp so they do not face the possibility of being required to be excluded from camp for up to 21 days following a measles exposure.
- [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

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measles-containing vaccines is completely safe and a blood test (serology) is not recommended for assessment of immunity.

- If possible, consider having a designated room (with a closed door) to isolate a camper or staff member that has symptoms of measles.
- If possible, have face masks of varying sizes (including children's sizes) to use for both the affected individual and the adult who supervises the camper.
- Ensure you have contact information for every camper (or their parents/guardians) and staff member attending the camp.
- During staff training, include information about measles symptoms, monitoring staff and campers for these symptoms, and reporting suspect cases to the supervisor.

#### **Before Campers and Staff Arrive:**

- Ask campers (or their parents/guardians) and staff to report if they have any symptoms of measles.
  - If people do report any symptoms before arriving, please advise them to stay home. 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 campers (or their parents/guardians) and staff to notify the camp of any potential measles exposures among susceptible (non-immune) individuals that may have occurred outside of camp (e.g., before camp started).
  - If there was a known exposure to measles, even if no symptoms are present, please contact public health and do not attend camp.

#### **During Camp:**

- Advise staff and campers to notify a supervisor if they develop any symptoms of measles while at camp.
- Track who is attending and visiting camp, as this will help with identifying contacts in the event of measles occurring in camp:
  - Keep a record of who attends the camp every day.
  - Keep a record of any off-site excursions made on a camp day.
  - Keep a record of all attendees and visitors to the camp with contact information in case follow-up is needed.

#### **In the event you suspect measles in a camper or staff:**

- Give the person a face mask that covers their mouth and nose.

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- If possible, isolate the person with symptoms to protect others from exposure:
    - Move a camper with measles symptoms to a private room with a door that closes and contact parents/guardians to pick them up. Keep the door closed and window open (if there is one).
    - Instruct staff with measles symptoms to isolate at home (see under “Before Campers and Staff Arrive” for duration). If they are unable to leave camp immediately, have them wait in a private room until transportation is arranged.
    - Any staff interacting with someone with suspect measles should also wear a face mask and be immune to measles – a susceptible (non-immune) person should not interact with a suspect case of measles. Minimize people from interacting with suspect measles as much as possible.
  - Contact your local health unit (information below) as soon as possible – they can provide further information in 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 [information about measles](#) or call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1.
- 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 summer camp, you can call public health for further information and guidance.
  - **Fraser Health:** 604-507-5484
  - **Interior Health:** 1-855-549-6364
  - **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