

Dear parents and caregivers,

Measles cases are being reported in the news and you may have questions. Public health is closely monitoring the situation locally and will provide additional information to school administrators.

Here is information about measles to help you understand risks for you and your family.

1. **Measles is a highly contagious infectious disease.** It is airborne and can linger in the air for up to 2 hours. Symptoms can resemble a common cold or respiratory infection (cough, runny nose, fever, pink eye) and includes a rash. Individuals are infectious 4 days before and 4 days after a rash begins. [Read this fact sheet](#) to learn more about measles.
2. **Measles cases are on the rise in Canada.** The majority of current cases are linked to international travel to regions with high transmission, such as Europe. Quebec is also reporting a rise in cases that are not linked to international travel, which is concerning.
3. **There is no treatment for a measles infection.** Common complications include pneumonia, ear infections, and diarrhea. Rarely, measles can cause brain infections and death. These complications can occur up to a year after a measles infection.
4. **Vaccination is up to 99% effective at preventing measles infections.** Currently, children attending school in Ontario are provided 2 doses of measles-containing vaccine to prevent infection as part of their routine immunizations. The first dose is MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella) vaccine given after the first birthday, and the second dose is MMRV (Measles-Mumps-Rubella-Varicella) vaccine given between 4 and 6 years of age. Infants as young as 6 months old are also eligible for 1 dose of MMR vaccine if they are travelling outside of Canada.
5. **Know your immunization history.** You can review your own or your child's immunization records through your local public health unit:
Residents of **St. Thomas, Elgin, and Oxford Counties**, visit www.swpublichealth.ca/vaccineswork
Residents of **London and Middlesex County**, visit www.healthunit.com/immunization-records
Can't find a record or it is incomplete? Contact your health care provider for support.
6. **Updating vaccinations.** To receive a vaccination, book an appointment with your health care provider, a walk-in clinic, or Travel Medicine Clinic. If you do not have a health care provider or Ontario Health Card, visit your local public health unit's website for eligibility and appointment availability.
Residents (up to age 18) of **St. Thomas, Elgin, and Oxford Counties**, visit www.swpublichealth.ca/booking
Residents of **London and Middlesex County**, visit <https://www.healthunit.com/immunization-clinic>

Important: In the event of an exposure or outbreak, individuals in the school (such as staff, support staff, and students) who have a documented vaccination exemption may be excluded from in-person learning. This is to protect the unimmunized individual from health risks associated with a measles exposure.

Refer to the [Measles and Rubella Weekly Monitoring Report](#) for more information about cases in Canada.



Joanne Kearon, MD, MSc, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC
Associate Medical Officer of Health
Middlesex-London Health Unit



Ninh Tran, MD, MSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Southwestern Public Health