



# PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

## Sharp rise in measles activity

A large increase in measles activity has been reported worldwide, with increases in the European region noted towards the end of 2023 (see [WHO](#) and [CDC](#) data on global epidemiology). Although cases in Canada are not above expected, the risk of importation due to travel (including following the upcoming March break) and subsequent outbreaks in the country may be elevated due to the global increases as well as lower national measles vaccination coverage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health care providers are encouraged to promote the importance of updating routine measles vaccinations with their patients, especially for those planning travel.

The following summarizes advice for updating measles vaccinations for travellers based on the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#):

- Children and adolescents who are travelling should ensure that they have received both doses of measles-containing vaccines.
- Infants between 6 and 12 months should receive one dose of measles-containing vaccine if travelling to areas where measles is of concern. These children will still need the routine two-dose series of measles-containing vaccine once they turn 1 year of age.
- Adults who will be travelling should ensure they have received two (2) doses of measles-containing vaccine if they were born in 1970 or later, and one (1) dose of measles-containing in persons born before 1970 who have no recall of having had measles infection
- To be effective vaccines should ideally be completed 2 weeks before travel

You are asked to remain on alert for patients who have symptoms consistent with measles. Consider measles as a diagnosis in patients with fever, cough, coryza, and/or conjunctivitis, followed by a generalized maculopapular rash.

For patients suspected to have measles, initiate prompt isolation to prevent transmission of the virus and collect specimens for laboratory testing (a nasopharyngeal or throat swab for viral detection; blood for serology; urine for viral detection). Please see [Measles: For Health Professionals](#) for additional details.

Public health authorities should be notified immediately of suspected cases for timely case and contact investigation and management. You should not wait until the laboratory tests are back to notify public health authorities.

Further information on vaccination recommendations and clinical symptoms of measles is available in the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#), [Measles: For Health Professionals](#) and [Caring for Kids: MMR \(Measles Mumps Rubella\) vaccine](#).