

Notice to Parents/Guardians

New Cases of Measles in Fraser Health

Since August, there have been four confirmed cases of measles across the Fraser Valley. Measles has been circulating in the Abbotsford/Chilliwack area for likely the past two months. More recently, cases have also been identified in Burnaby and Surrey, which means the risk of exposure to measles is more widespread.

Why is Measles a Concern?

Measles is a serious infection caused by the measles virus. Measles can cause severe illness and complications such as pneumonia, brain damage, blindness, and deafness. Among the most serious potential complications is brain inflammation (encephalitis), which occurs in approximately one in 1,000 cases. Approximately one in 3,000 cases will die from measles.

What are the symptoms of Measles?

People infected with measles have symptoms of fever, cough runny nose, and red and inflamed eyes. These symptoms are followed by a rash, which starts first on the face and neck, and spreads to the chest, arms and legs, and lasts at least three days. Spots may also appear inside the mouth and look like small grains of sand on a red base.

How is Measles Spread?

Measles is a very contagious disease. It spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes, and can survive in the air for several hours. An infected person can spread the measles virus even before they know they are sick, and can spread the virus from four days before their rash until four days after their rash.

What should you do if you/your child develop(s) symptoms?

If you or your child develops a fever and cough or other symptoms that may be measles, you or your child should stay at home and keep away from others who may not be immune. You or your child should be examined by a doctor. It is best to call ahead so that you or your child can be seen quickly and not expose other people by sitting in a waiting room for any period of time.

Protection

The most effective protection against measles is two (2) doses of MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine after one year of age to all those born after 1957.

If you or your children have not received 2 doses of measles vaccine after one year of age we encourage you to contact your Family Physician or local Public Health Unit to book an appointment. The vaccine is also available at some local Pharmacies and can be given there to adults and children over five years old.

Please call your Pharmacy or visit the FH website for a map of Pharmacists offering the vaccine (<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/>). We also recommend making sure your child is up to date for all of their other immunizations.

For more information on measles, please visit http://www.bccdc.ca/dis-cond/a-z/_m/Measles/default.htm

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Hope HU Tel: 604-860-7630	Langley HU Tel: 604-539-2900	Maple Ridge HU Tel: 604-476-7000	Mission HU Tel: 604-814-5500	New Westminster HU Tel: 604-777-6740	Newport HU, Port Moody Tel: 604-949-7200
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