



Media Release

May 22, 2019

Measles Not Present in At Risk Individual

The results of laboratory testing confirm a local individual considered at risk for measles does not have the virus. The individual in question attended Warton Hospital Emergency Department on Wednesday, May 16. Laboratory tests for measles were ordered by the attending physician. Results confirm no measles present.

Within 24 hours of reporting a suspect case of measles, public health is required to identify all contacts and classify them as susceptible or non-susceptible and complete contact identification and tracing. Tracing involves following up with all contacts who shared the same air space for any length of time during the period of communicability, including two hours after the case left the air space, and determining their immunization status in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

Public Health staff worked throughout the long weekend to notify all individuals who may have been in contact with the suspect case. Plans were made to prepare for additional measles vaccine and post exposure prophylaxis if required to prevent further spread. In addition, in collaboration with the local hospital and the provincial public health lab, lab testing was expedited and negative results were shared with affected individuals.

Measles is one of the most highly communicable infectious diseases that spreads easily to those who are susceptible, including anyone who has not had two doses of a measles vaccine (MMR or MMRV), has not had past infection, or no laboratory evidence of immunity. Children under one year of age, pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems can become very ill with measles.

Fortunately, Grey Bruce has high immunization rates. Based on 2017 school immunization records, 96.8 per cent of 12-year-olds and 97.7 per cent over 17 year-olds were up to date for immunization coverage. Those born before 1970 are generally considered protected against measles, but there are circumstances where this may not be the case. If people are unsure of their immunization status, they are encouraged to check with their health care provider.

A healthier future for all.

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“Although the last measles case in Grey Bruce was in 1996, there is measles activity in Ontario. In fact, measles is circulating in many countries and I encourage anyone who is travelling to ensure they are protected against measles before they go.” said Denna Leach, Manager of Infectious Diseases program at the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

As of May 4, 2019, the latest reporting date, Health Canada reports there have been 48 confirmed cases of measles in Canada.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against the measles virus.

Attachment: Measles Fact Sheet

For More Information:

Denna Leach

Manager, Infectious Diseases Program

Grey Bruce Health Unit

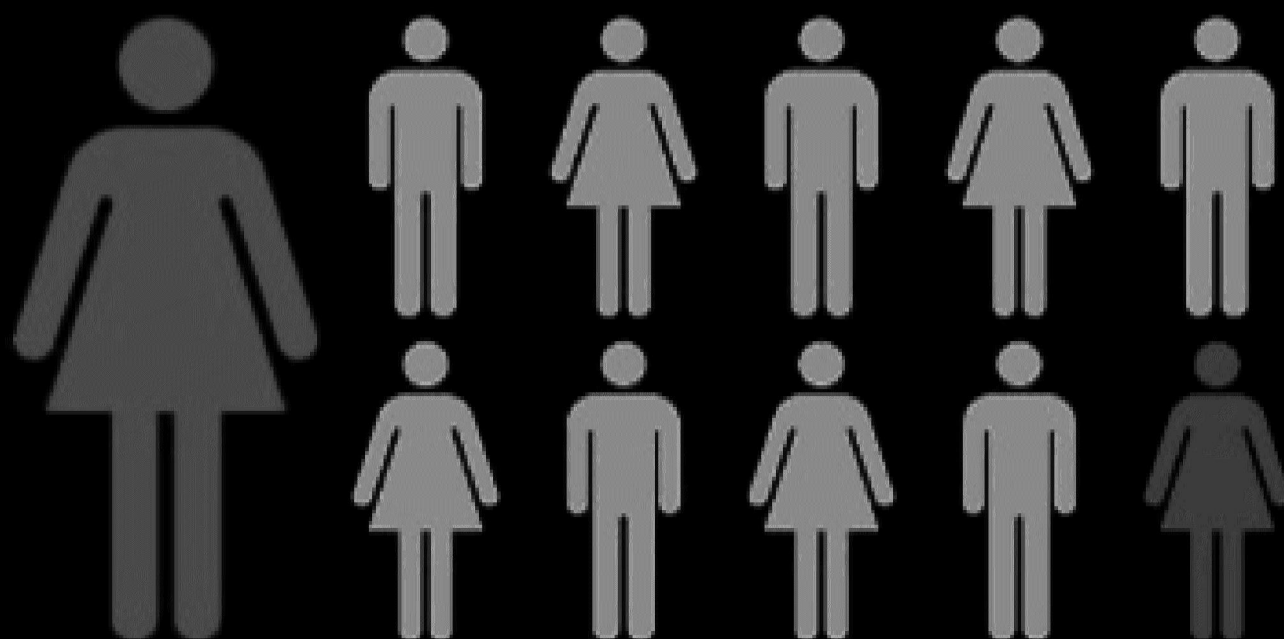
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MEASLES



is **highly contagious** and spreads through the air when an infected person **coughs or sneezes**.



It is so contagious that if one person has it, **9 out of 10 people** of all ages around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected.



FACT SHEET

Grey Bruce Health Unit, 101 17th Street East, Owen Sound, N4K 0A5
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Measles

What is measles?

Measles, also known as “red measles”, or Rubeola, is one of the easiest viruses to spread from person to person because it is airborne. Measles is no longer common in Canada but still occurs in many parts of the world. There is a vaccine that can prevent measles infection.

What are the symptoms?

Early symptoms include a fever 38.3°C (101°F) or higher, cough, runny nose, and red, irritated eyes. A red blotchy rash appears on the third to seventh day and starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. The rash lasts 4-5 days. Measles is communicable a few days before the onset of the early symptoms and remains communicable until 4 days after the onset of the rash. Complications can be serious and include ear infections, pneumonia, diarrhoea, and less frequently, swelling of the brain.

How is it spread?

An infected person can spread measles to others when they cough or sneeze and the droplets enter the nose or mouth of another person. Measles is very infectious. The measles virus can live in the droplets for several hours and can live on surfaces for up to 2 hours. You can spread measles from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash appears. It takes about 7 to 21 days, to come down with measles after being in contact with someone who has the disease.

How is it diagnosed?

It is important to see your doctor or nurse practitioner if you think you have measles. Tests will be ordered that are specific for the measles virus and include a blood test, urine test and throat swab. When making your appointment, let the office know that you may have measles so they can take precautions to prevent spreading measles to other people.

What is the treatment for measles?

There is no medicine to treat measles, but you can take medicine to help with the fever and itching.

How do I protect myself and others?

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles although cases occasionally occur in immunized persons. Measles vaccine is given in combination with measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) on or after a child's first birthday. A second dose is given as part of a combination vaccine for measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella/chickenpox (MMRV) at 4-6 years of age. People born before 1970 are considered protected against measles because they most likely had the disease as a child. Everyone else should have 2 doses of measles containing vaccine. Speak to your doctor or nurse practitioner if you are not sure about your vaccination status, or if you do not have a healthcare provider call the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team at the health unit.

You can also help prevent the spread of measles by washing your hands after coughing, sneezing, and going to the washroom, and before preparing food or eating. Do not share cigarettes or drink from the same glass, water bottle, or straw as others. Cough and sneeze into your arm.

If you have measles, it is important that you stay home and avoid contact with others until the fifth day from when the rash started.