

## **Measles Preparedness: Important Health Information for Families Attending Summer Events**

As we prepare for summer gatherings, we want to share important health information in light of increased measles activity in our community.

Measles is a serious illness that spreads easily through the air and can lead to complications like pneumonia, ear infections, and more serious outcomes. It is especially concerning in young children, infants, and those who have not yet been fully vaccinated.

The good news is that vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect yourself, your family, and the community. Two doses of a measles-containing vaccine (MMR, MMRV, or M) provide about 99% protection.

### **Who is considered protected from measles?**

You are likely protected if:

- You have received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine, or
- You have had a blood test confirming immunity, or
- You were born before 1970, and are generally presumed to have natural immunity.

### **How to Prepare for Summer Events**

#### **1. Find your and your child's (where applicable) immunization records**

- Look for your immunization card.
- Contact your health care provider or your child's school.
- Your local Public Health Unit may also have records on file.

#### **2. Make sure your family is up to date**

- If you're missing a dose or unsure, speak with your doctor or contact your local Public Health Unit.
- Public Health offers free measles vaccines for anyone who needs them and does not have a regular doctor. See below for more details.

#### **3. Know the signs and what to do if symptoms develop**

- Watch for fever, cough, red eyes, and a blotchy red rash that usually begins on the face and spreads. Small white spots (Koplik spots) may appear in the mouth before the rash.

- If you or your child develops symptoms, stay home, avoid gatherings, and call your health care provider or 811 for guidance.
- If medical care is needed, call ahead before visiting any clinic or emergency department.

### **Additional Measles Vaccine Recommendations**

Waterloo Region is part of the larger area of Southwestern Ontario that is currently affected by measles. The following additional vaccine recommendations are in effect for persons who live, work, travel, worship or spend time in Southwestern Ontario, including Waterloo Region:

#### **Infants older than 6 months and younger than 12 months:**

- One early dose of measles vaccine is recommended.
- Two more doses will still be needed after their first birthday.

#### **Children aged 1 to 3 years:**

- If your child has received one dose, they are encouraged to get their second dose as soon as possible, as long as at least 4 weeks have passed since the first dose.

#### **Children (4+ years), youth, and adults (born after 1970):**

- If you or your child has received only one dose, you are encouraged to get a second dose as soon as possible, as long as at least 4 weeks have passed since the first dose.

If you have questions about measles or want to schedule a vaccine appointment with Public Health, please visit [regionofwaterloo.ca/measles](https://regionofwaterloo.ca/measles) or call Public Health's Measles Information Line at 519-575-4480.

Thank you for working together to keep our community gatherings safe and healthy this summer.

Sincerely,

Region of Waterloo Public Health