

August 2016

Dear School Parents, Staff and Volunteers:

**PROTECTION AGAINST MEASLES - IMMUNIZATION REMINDER FOR SCHOOL PARENTS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Measles is an illness that can sometimes cause severe health problems, and occasionally death. It can be prevented by measles immunization. A school exposure occurs when a person with measles is present at a school. Persons who attend, work or volunteer at that school are at risk of getting measles. **When there is a school measles exposure:**

- 1. Public Health will check all students, staff and volunteers for protection against measles.**
- 2. Students, staff and volunteers who do not have protection against measles may be excluded, meaning they are not allowed to attend, work or volunteer at school, until the risk for infection is over.**

***Two doses of measles vaccine given before a school measles exposure provides protection against measles and avoids possible exclusion.***

Please ensure your local Public Health Centre has a record of immunizations which may have been given previously in different locations in Alberta, Canada, or other countries, translated if necessary. To receive measles vaccine or check immunization records, please contact an Alberta Health Services Public Health Centre. For more information on measles immunization, please go to [immunizealberta.ca](http://immunizealberta.ca). For more information on measles, protection, vaccine schedule, exclusion, and Public Health Centres, please see other side.

Thank you for your attention and help in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alberta Health Services Medical Officers of Health

Dr. Albert de Villiers  
Zone Lead Medical Officer of Health  
North West Area

Dr. Chris Sikora  
Zone Lead Medical Officer of Health  
Edmonton Zone

Dr. Deena Hinshaw  
Zone Lead Medical Officer of Health  
Central Zone

Dr. Richard Musto  
Zone Lead Medical Officer of Health  
Calgary Zone

Dr. Vivien Suttorp  
Zone Lead Medical Officer of Health  
South Zone

**Measles:**

Measles is a viral illness with fever, cough, runny nose or red eyes, and a red blotchy rash. It is spread easily through the air. Symptoms usually start 8 – 12 days after exposure; it takes about 14 days for rash to appear. About one in three children with measles will suffer more severe problems, including ear infections, diarrhea, croup, pneumonia, febrile seizures and inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). Persons who may have measles should contact Health Link Alberta (811).

**Protection Against Measles:**

Persons born in 1970 or later are considered protected if they have a written record of two doses of live measles-containing vaccine. The first dose must have been given on or after the first birthday, and the second one after a minimum time has passed (differs by vaccine).

Persons born before 1970 are considered protected because most have been infected.

**Measles-Containing Vaccines:**

Children aged 1 year and 4-6 years of age are offered measles-containing vaccine at no charge as part of the Alberta routine childhood immunization program.

**Exclusion from school due to lack of protection against measles:**

- Exclusion lasts from 5 days after the first exposure up to 21 days after the last exposure. This continues for each new case. All persons attending, working or volunteering at school will be considered exposed, whether they were present when the person with measles was at school or not.
- Excluded persons must remain at home to avoid exposure of others in the community.
- Persons who get measles must remain at home for four days after the start of the rash.

**To find a local Public Health Centre:**

- visit the Alberta Health Services website [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca): select *Find Health Care, Find Hospitals and Facilities, Facility Type, and Public Health Centres*
- call Health Link Alberta (811)
- consult a phone book

[For information about immunization visit immunizealberta.ca](http://immunizealberta.ca)