

25 February 2019

Dear Parents, Students and School Staff

Re: Measles outbreak in the Lower Mainland

I am writing to provide you an update regarding the local measles outbreak. This outbreak has caused understandable concern within Richmond schools and the community-at-large. To date, 13 cases of measles have been identified, with eight cases in school age children in Vancouver (Jules-Verne, Rose-des-Vents, and Ann-Hebert schools), the remainder among family members or other travelers returning from South East Asia. Students attending other schools have not been exposed in the school environment. Though cases have visited several public locations, including those in Richmond, at this time, we are not concerned about measles transmission in the wider community.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that spreads through the air. It starts with fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. These symptoms develop between 7 to 21 days after a person is exposed. A characteristic rash then develops, beginning on the face and spreading down the body.

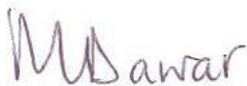
Most people in Canada are protected against infection through immunization with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Children receive MMR at 12 months of age followed by a second dose in kindergarten (4-6 years of age). Getting these immunizations earlier than 1 year and K entry is not necessary. **If you or your child has not been immunized against measles, we highly recommend that you make arrangements to be immunized as soon as possible. Two doses of MMR vaccine are 99% effective at preventing measles.** MMR vaccine is available through your family physician, walk-in-clinic, local pharmacy, or local public health unit.

To protect you and your family from measles, we recommend the following:

- If you were born on or after January 1st, 1970 and have not had two doses of measles vaccine or are unsure of your immunization history, you should receive a dose of MMR vaccine.
- If you were born before 1970, you are most likely immune through measles infection in your childhood. However, if you believe that you did not have measles infection, it is safe to receive a dose of vaccine.

There is no reason to believe that you or your child has been exposed to measles in the school setting. However, the best way to protect yourself is to receive the MMR vaccine in accordance with the above guidelines. Further information on [measles virus](#) and the [measles vaccine](#) is available at HealthLinkBC in several languages. Please don't hesitate to call a Public Health Nurse at 604-233-3150 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Meena Dawar
Medical Health Officer, Richmond