

August 27, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As measles continues to spread in some areas and communities in Alberta, across Canada and globally, our collective efforts are making a difference with the support of parents and communities. As we approach the beginning of the school year, I want to share important information about measles and how you can continue to protect your family, your community and our schools.

Measles is a highly contagious illness that can lead to serious complications, particularly for young children, pregnant women and vulnerable individuals. Measles spreads quickly, especially in close-knit communities where people gather frequently and where immunization rates are lower.

Children under 18 years have been most affected by the current measles outbreak in Canada. As of August 8, 2025, Alberta has reported more than 1,700 confirmed measles cases, with more than 1,200 of those in children under the age of 18.

Alberta's government is taking measles seriously with ongoing efforts to prevent measles and protect the health of all Albertans, especially children. This includes the provincial "*Don't get measles. Get immunized.*" awareness campaign, a dedicated measles information [web page](#) and a measles hotline (1-844-944-3434) to check immunization records and book appointments. Public Health has also expanded local measles clinics, offering extended hours and additional locations to meet community needs.

As children head back to school, I want to remind everyone that the best protection against measles is ensuring you and your children have received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine after the age of 12 months. The vaccine has a long-proven record of safety and is highly effective at preventing infection and associated complications.

Please be assured that if a measles case is reported at your child's school, clear public health protocols are in place to limit the spread of measles and protect students and staff. Schools have a key role in sharing information and supporting quick action. If your child has received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine after the age of 12 months, they are considered protected against the virus. If your child is not fully immunized or is diagnosed with measles, Public Health will provide guidance to help prevent further spread.

For those who have chosen not to immunize, it is important to know that measles can cause serious harm, particularly in children and other vulnerable individuals. While getting your measles immunization is the most critical step to take, if you are feeling sick or have been exposed to measles, you should also:

- Stay home when feeling sick.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Call Health Link at 811 before visiting any hospital, clinic or health care provider.

We remain committed to protecting the health and safety of all Albertans by providing public health communications and recommendations through diverse platforms, including these additional measles resources:

- **Text for vaccine record:** To check the immunization record for you or your child, text “vaccine record” to 88111. This information is also available through the hotline at 1-844-944-3434.
- **Fact sheets:** The measles toolkit is available online, which includes [Measles 101](#) and [Measles and back to school: information for parents and guardians](#) that you may find useful.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support to keep our schools and families safe. If you have any questions about this letter or measles in general, please call the measles hotline at 1-844-944-3434 or visit our measles website at: <https://www.alberta.ca/measles>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Sookram', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Sunil Sookram
Interim Chief Medical Officer of Health

Measles and Back to School

Information for parents and guardians

Measles 101

Measles cases are increasing across Alberta, Canada and globally.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. Measles can have very serious and lasting impact for those who become infected.

Measles can be serious at any age; however, children under the age of five years, those who are pregnant and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of severe outcomes from measles. It is critical that we all do our part to protect the youngest and most vulnerable individuals in our communities from this preventable disease.

Symptoms

The common symptoms of measles include:

- fever;
- cough, runny nose or red eyes; and
- a rash that appears 3 to 7 days after the fever starts, often beginning behind the ears and on the face and spreading down to the body, arms and legs. The rash appears red and blotchy on lighter skin colours and purple or darker on darker skin.

Complications

Measles can cause serious complications:

- 1 in 10 people develop ear or lung infections (including pneumonia).
- 1 in 1,000 people develop encephalitis (swelling of the brain), which can lead to seizures, deafness, or brain damage.
- Death is estimated to occur in 1 to 10 of 10,000 measles cases in Canada
- 4 to 11 of every 100,000 people may develop fatal brain inflammation about 10 years later.

Prevention

The best protection against measles is to ensure you are up to date with your [immunizations](#). The measles vaccine is highly effective at preventing infection and complications from the disease. After just one dose of measles-containing vaccine (given on or after one year of age), protection against measles is about 85 to 95

per cent, and after two doses, protection is almost 100 per cent.

In Alberta, measles-containing vaccine is offered, free of charge, through Alberta's provincially funded immunization program. Children in Alberta typically receive their first dose of vaccine at 12 months of age, and their second dose at 18 months of age.

Adults, born in 1970 or later should have two life-time doses of measles-containing vaccine. Adults born **before** 1970 are generally considered immune.

For those who cannot be immunized (for example: young infants, those who are pregnant, and those with specific immunocompromising conditions), you can reduce the risk of acquiring measles by avoiding communities with significant measles spread, only socializing with people who you know are immunized, and avoiding indoor gatherings.

How do I know if my child is protected?

To check the immunization record for you or your child, text "vaccine record" to 88111. You can also call the measles hotline at 1-844-944-3434 to check for immunization records or to book an immunization appointment. For more information on routine childhood immunization, including measles, please visit www.ahs.ca/immunize.

Measles exposures in school

If a case of measles is infectious while in school, public health teams will work with the school administration to reduce the risk of measles spreading.

If your child has been immunized with two doses of measles containing vaccine, they are considered protected.

If your child is not protected against measles, public health teams will contact you. If a contact is identified quickly, post exposure prophylaxis may be available. It is important that individuals who have been exposed to measles and are not protected stay home from activities in all public settings (including school and childcare facilities), during the period in which they may develop the disease. This period begins five days

after first exposure to a case of measles through 21 days after the last exposure to a case of measles.

By staying home and monitoring for symptoms, this greatly reduces the risk of further spread of disease to other vulnerable individuals.

Guidance for parents and guardians

If you think your child has measles or has been exposed, stay home and call Health Link at 811 or your local healthcare provider for further guidance.

Public health will contact you if your child is diagnosed with measles. They will ask questions and provide information to help prevent spread of infection to others. This includes identifying people who may have been exposed, especially those who are not protected against the disease. If these people are found quickly, steps can be taken to reduce their risk of getting measles. They may ask about:

- Your child's symptoms and when they began;
- Your child's immunization record;
- Anyone your child may have been in contact with and their symptoms, including household members and others;
- The immunization records of household members;
- Public settings your child visited before symptoms started or during the time when they were infectious (for example, childcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, social gatherings.)

If your child is infected with measles, it is important to keep your child at home and away from public places, including school and childcare facilities. Staying away from others while infectious protects your school and community.

Don't get measles. Get immunized.

Visit alberta.ca/measles for more information.