

Direction régionale de santé publique

BY EMAIL

February 29, 2024

To parents and daycare and school staff

Re: Important! Cases of Measles in Montréal

Dear Madam or Sir,

Recently in Montréal, there have been two **cases of measles**, one of which was in a school. Measles is currently on the rise in many countries, including in North America. With March Break approaching and people travelling again, it is important to remain cautious.

Measles is **highly contagious**. It can be very serious, especially for young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. There is no treatment for this disease.

Vaccination is the best protection against this virus. Two (2) doses of vaccine are 95% effective.

Check your vaccination booklets to find out if all your family is protected. There are different brands of measles vaccines.

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In Québec, a person is protected if :		Examples of brand names of measles vaccines
Person born after 1980	Has received 2 doses of vaccine (starting at 12 months of age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorix • Priorix-Tetra • MMR II • ProQuad • Attenuvax • Moru-Viraten • Rimevax • MMR • Trivirix • Measles vaccine
Person born between 1970 and 1979	There are several categories. See the next page for details.	
Person born before 1970	Considered to be protected, even without vaccination.	
At any age	Has had measles and has proof of it (medical certificate or blood test)	

If you are unsure about your own or your child's vaccination status :

- Call your CLSC;
- Check with a health professional (e.g. school nurse);
- Go to the web page [Check if your child's vaccines are up to date](#).

We strongly recommend that people who are not protected get vaccinated as quickly as possible. If there is an outbreak in a daycare or school, anyone who is not protected will be excluded from the setting and will have to isolate at home. This period can last several weeks.

To get the free vaccine, go to [Clic-Santé](#) to book an appointment, or call your CLSC. March Break can be a good time to get the vaccine. If you hesitate to get vaccinated, click on the [Get started!](#) button to talk to a MIIKOVAC immunization counsellor who can answer your questions. This service is free.

For more information about measles or the vaccine, go to [Measles](#) or the *Measles* section at the end of this letter:

Thank you for your cooperation and vigilance.



Mylène Drouin, M.D. , FRCP
Regional Director of Public Health

MD/ys

Measles : Additional information

How does the virus spread?

The virus spreads when a person breathes the same air as someone who is infected, even at a distance of more than 2 metres (6 feet). The virus can stay suspended in the air for a few hours and even disperse through the air. Measles can also spread through direct contact with an infected person or contaminated objects.

Measles is highly contagious. If a person who is not protected comes into contact with someone who is sick, there is a 90% risk of catching the disease.

What are the possible complications?

Measles can cause ear infections, but also rare and serious complications.

Children who get measles risk developing a lung infection (pneumonia), hearing and/or vision loss, a brain infection (around 1 case in 1,000 to 2,000) or even death. About 1 in 10 people must be treated in hospital.

Anyone who is infected can develop complications, especially :

- children less than a year old;
- pregnant women (risk of miscarriage or premature delivery);
- people with weakened immune systems.

What are the symptoms of measles?

- Fever;
- Cough, runny nose or conjunctivitis (red eyes and sensitivity to light);
- Red spots or rash on the skin (on the face, then on the whole body).

A person who has measles is contagious for 4 days before and 4 days after the rash appears. The illness lasts 1 to 2 weeks.

What to do if you have symptoms of measles ?

If your child or another family member has symptoms of measles, keep them at home and call Info-Santé (811). If you have to go to a clinic or hospital, call before you go to let them know that the person might have measles. It is recommended to wear a mask.

In Québec, people born between 1970 and 1979 are considered to be protected if they :

- have had measles and have proof of it (medical certificate or blood test);
- have received 1 dose of vaccine and are not health workers or trainees, travellers or military recruits;
- have received 2 doses of vaccine if they are health workers or trainees, travellers or military recruits.