

Measles

Dear Physician,

A young adult from Vancouver, with no recent history of travel outside of BC, was diagnosed with measles. He likely acquired the infection in late January while skiing in Revelstoke, where three other clinical cases of measles among skiers have occurred.

At this time, there is no evidence of sustained transmission in the Lower Mainland. However, Revelstoke is a popular ski destination and travel to this area likely increased during recent reading breaks for colleges and universities.

Please increase your index of suspicion for measles if you see a patient presenting with symptoms compatible with measles, including fever, cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis and a red maculopapular rash. The rash starts on the 3rd or 4th day of illness, initially in the hairline and spreads rapidly to the face, trunk and limbs. The pathognomonic Koplik spots appear inside the cheek next to the upper premolars and molars early in the illness.

If you suspect measles, collect a throat swab and/or urine for measles virus isolation and blood for serologic testing (measles IgG and IgM). **At the suspect stage**, please call Communicable Disease Nurse on call at (604) 983-6700 or after hours at 604-527-4893, and ask for the Medical Health Officer on-call. We ask you **not** to wait for lab confirmation before calling, because post-exposure prophylaxis for contacts is most effective if offered within 3 days of exposure.

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection transmitted via the airborne route. If a patient presents with a history of fever and rash, please ask them to wear a mask, and place them in a private room as soon as possible.

If you require further information, please contact us at 604-983-6700.

Sincerely,



Brian A. O'Connor, MD, MHSc
Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health, North Shore