

Primary Health Care

Nipawin, Carrot River, Arborfield, Cumberland House and surrounding areas residing on Treaty 5 and 6 Territory.



MEASLES

Measles, also called rubeola, is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable infectious disease caused by the measles virus. Although mainly considered a childhood infection, it can also occur in unvaccinated or partially vaccinated adults.

Measles is an airborne disease which spreads easily from one person to the next through the coughs and sneezes of infected people. It may also be spread through direct contact with mouth or nasal secretions. It is extremely contagious: 9 out of 10 people who are not immune and share living space with an infected person will be infected. Measles is one of the most easily spread of all human infections - an individual can be infected by simply being in the same room as an infected person.

Symptoms can appear 7 - 21 days after being infected with the measles virus. People infected with measles can spread it to others before they have symptoms themselves. Initial symptoms include: fever, cough, runny nose, red watery eyes. Small white spots may appear inside the mouth and throat 2-3 days after symptoms begin. Approximately 3-7 days after symptoms begin, a rash appears as small red spots and develops on the face and spreads down the body, arms and legs. The rash can last 4-7 days. Most individuals recover from measles within 2 or 3 weeks.

Complications can include ear infection, pneumonia, diarrhea. While rare, severe complications can include respiratory failure, inflammation and swelling of the brain (encephalitis), death. Long-term complications of encephalitis can include blindness, deafness, intellectual disability. Women who contract measles while pregnant may suffer miscarriage, go into premature labor, give birth to an infant with low birth weight.

Transmission - individuals with measles are usually infectious about 4 days before rash onset to 4 days after the appearance of the rash. The measles virus can persist in the air or on surfaces for up to 2 hours after an infected person has left the space. People who recover from measles have life-long immunity to the disease.

All persons who have not had a previous measles infection or who have not had 2 doses of a measles-containing vaccine are at risk of the infection. Mothers who are immune to measles pass antibodies to their children while they are in the womb, especially if the mother acquired immunity through infection rather than vaccination. Such antibodies will usually give newborn infants some immunity against measles but these antibodies are gradually lost over the course of the first nine months of life.

In Canada, adults born before 1970 are generally presumed to have acquired immunity due to infection with measles when they were younger. This is due to high levels of measles circulation before 1970. However, vaccination for measles is still recommended for some population groups even if born before 1970.

Treatment helps relieve symptoms and in some cases, treats or helps to prevent severe complications. There is no specific antiviral medication for a measles infection. Most people with measles recover at home but individuals with severe measles may require hospitalization.

Prevention - Measles is a vaccine preventable disease. A very effective vaccine, as part of a three-part MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella). In Canada, this is routinely given to children in a two dose series (first dose at 12 months of age, second dose at 18 months of age).

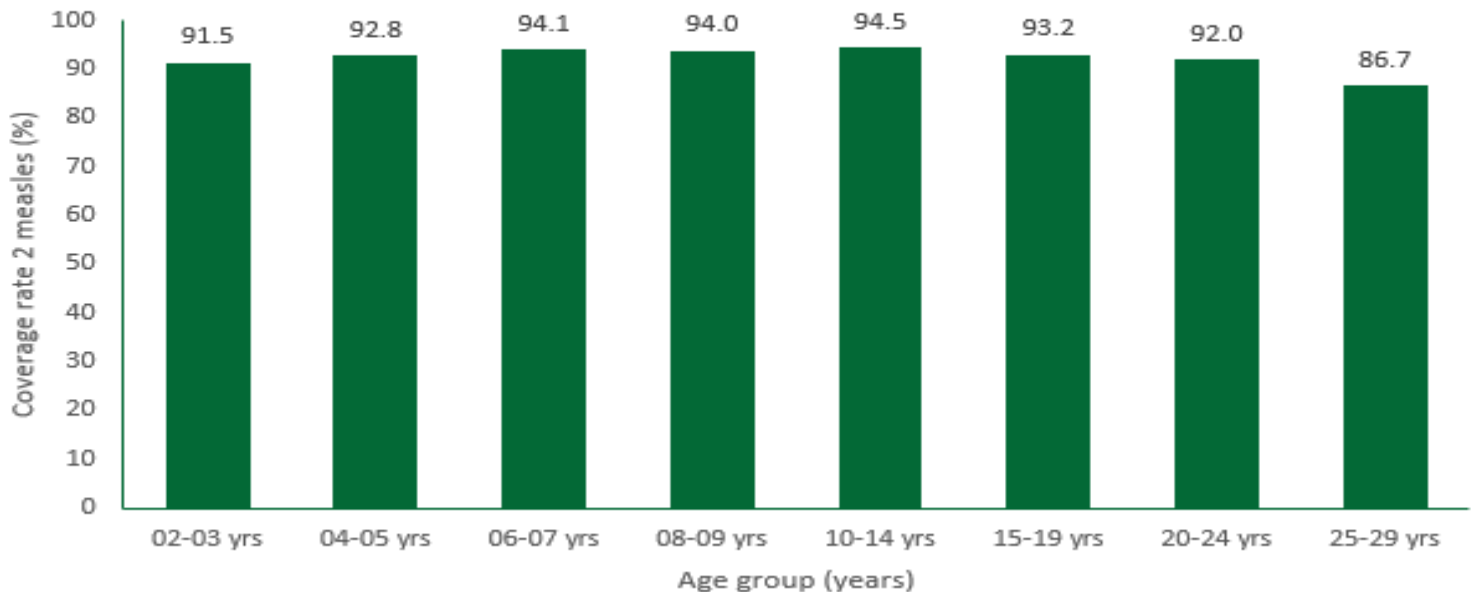
- Dr. Mohammad Khan, Medical Health Officer





North East 5

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If you suspect that you or your child have measles, call ahead before visiting your physician or an emergency department to avoid risk of transmission. It is important for anyone who thinks they may have contracted measles to have tests done to confirm the diagnosis.

Routine Immunizations for the Whole Family

The pandemic disrupted many routine immunizations, but now is good time to get back on track.

Did you know there are routine vaccinations for adults too? Immunizations for preventable diseases including measles, chicken pox and mumps provide indirect protection to your family, friends and community. If enough people are vaccinated, it is harder for a preventable disease to gain a foothold in a community.

**To discuss your immunization needs, contact your local
Public Health Office at 306-862-7230**