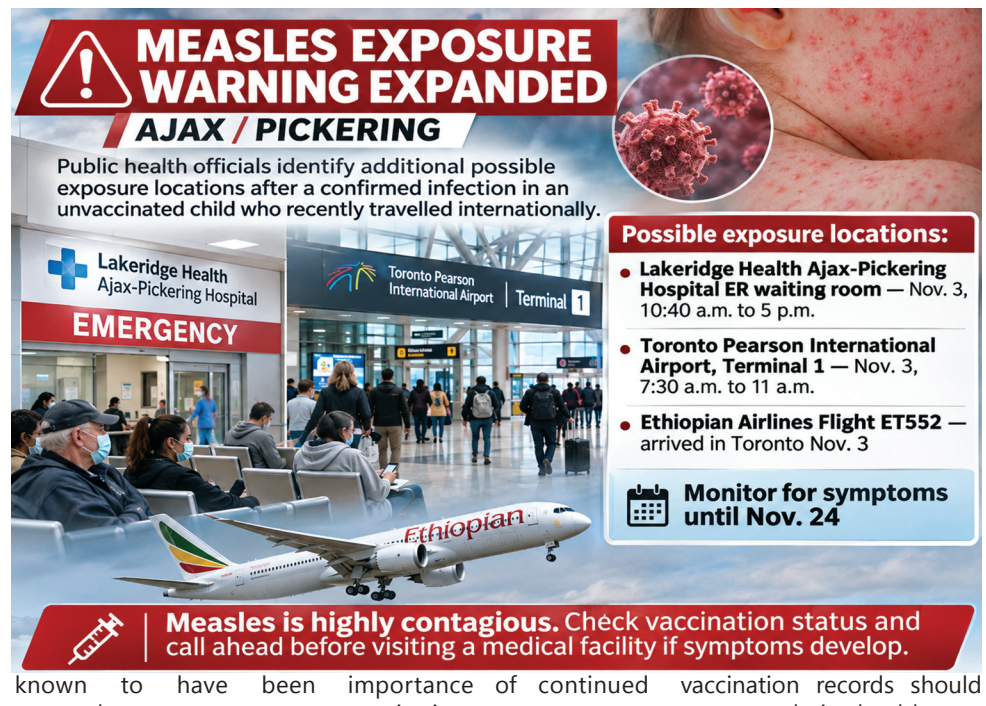
MEASLES ALERT EXPANDS ACROSS DURHAM REGION — HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN OF POSSIBLE EXPOSURES



Ajax-Pickering Hospital, Toronto Pearson Airport and International Flight Identified as Health Authorities Urge Residents to Check Vaccinations

By The Central Newspaper

November 13, 2026AJAX / PICKERING — Durham Region residents are being urged to remain vigilant following an expanded public health warning involving a confirmed measles infection in an unvaccinated child who recently travelled internationally.

The Durham Region Health Department issued its initial notification November 6, followed by an expanded warning November 7 identifying three possible exposure settings, including a hospital emergency department, Canada's busiest airport and an international passenger flight.

The confirmed infection brings Durham Region's reported total to five measles cases in 2026, raising renewed concerns about vaccination coverage, international travel and the potential spread of this highly contagious disease.

According to public health officials, people may have been exposed at the following locations:Lakeridge Health Ajax-Pickering Hospital: Emergency department waiting room, 580 Harwood Avenue South, Ajax, on November 3 between 10:40 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Toronto Pearson International Airport: Terminal 1, November 3 between 7:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Ethiopian Airlines Flight ET552: Travelling from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on November 2, with a stopover in Rome, before arriving in Toronto on November 3 at approximately 7:30 a.m.

Anyone present during these periods should monitor for symptoms until November 24, 2026.

The Health Department confirmed it has been investigating the infection and contacting individuals known to have been exposed.

Public Health Ontario's November 9 exposure listing also identified all three settings, reinforcing the importance of continued monitoring.

Measles is among the most contagious infectious diseases affecting humans. Unlike many common respiratory infections, the virus can remain suspended in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an enclosed area.

This presents particular concerns in hospitals, airport terminals and other crowded public facilities.

The Durham Region Health Department warns: "Measles is a highly contagious disease that spreads easily to those who are not immunized or have not previously had measles."

Symptoms generally develop seven to 21 days after infection. They can include high fever, persistent coughing, runny nose, red or watery eyes, sensitivity to light and a distinctive red rash that can last several days.

The illness can also cause serious complications, including pneumonia, brain inflammation and, in rare circumstances, death.

Infants younger than one year, pregnant individuals without immunity and people with weakened immune systems are particularly vulnerable.

Public health authorities emphasize that vaccination remains the most effective defence against measles.

Residents are encouraged to verify whether they and their children have received the recommended two doses of measles-containing vaccine.

Public Health Ontario states: "Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself against measles."

Individuals born before 1970 are generally presumed to have immunity because measles circulated widely before routine vaccination became established.

However, health-care workers and certain other individuals may require documented protection regardless of age.

People uncertain about their vaccination records should contact their health-care provider or local public health unit.

IHealth officials are particularly concerned about potentially infected individuals unknowingly exposing patients, medical personnel and other vulnerable residents.

Anyone developing symptoms should remain home, avoid school or work and telephone a medical provider before seeking an assessment.

The Health Department advises: "Call ahead before visiting a clinic or a primary care provider."

Advance notification allows health-care facilities to implement precautions, including isolation procedures, to prevent further transmission.

esidents seeking medical assessment should also wear a well-fitting mask.

The latest warning underscores the importance of maintaining vaccination records and taking infectious disease notifications seriously.

Although three locations have been identified, possible exposure does not mean everyone present will develop measles.

Nevertheless, the risk requires prompt attention, particularly among unvaccinated children and medically vulnerable individuals.

As international travel continues connecting Durham communities with destinations worldwide, regional health officials face ongoing challenges in identifying imported infections and preventing community transmission.

The message to Durham residents is clear: Check your vaccination status, recognize the symptoms and act responsibly if exposure is suspected.

For additional assistance, residents may contact Durham Health Connection Line at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729.



