

Public Health Update from Southwestern Public Health

For Health Care Providers in Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas



February 22, 2024

An Update from Dr. Ninh Tran, Medical Officer of Health at Southwestern Public Health

Public Health: What You Need to Know

MEASLES PREPAREDNESS

- In December, WHO reported a 30-fold increase in measles cases in Europe.
- There are currently 4 active cases of measles in Canada, 2 of which are in Ontario (Peel and Toronto).
- **ACTION:** Health care providers must be prepared for potential outbreaks, particularly where susceptible individuals (e.g., unvaccinated) travel to and return from countries where measles is circulating. This is especially important with travel over the upcoming March Break.
 - **Encourage patients to receive all routine vaccinations**, including MMR and MMRV.
 - **In addition to routine immunizations**, the following is recommended for those at higher risk of exposure to measles:
 - **Infants 6 to 11 months of age** who are travelling to areas with increased measles transmission should be immunized with one dose of MMR. Two additional doses are required beginning on or after the first birthday.
 - **Adults 18 years of age and older** who have previously received one dose of MMR should receive a second dose if they are health care workers, post-secondary students, planning to travel to areas with increased measles transmission or based on the health care provider's clinical judgment.
 - **Consider measles in your differential diagnoses**, particularly in returning travellers with respiratory symptoms (with or without a rash).
- **REMINDER:** Measles is a reportable disease of public health significance. **Any suspected cases** should be reported immediately to public health, and cases should be placed under airborne precautions and tested. [Refer to testing guidance for instruction.](#)
- **ACTION:** Please forward this information to urgent care teams (e.g., Emergency Room staff, Urgent Care, etc.).

GENERAL RESPIRATORY VIRUS UPDATE

- Refer to the SWPH Respiratory Virus Activity Dashboard for details: <https://www.swpublichealth.ca/en/shared-content/respiratory-virus-activity-dashboard.aspx>

Southwestern Public Health
www.swpublichealth.ca
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EXTENDED ELIGIBILITY ON PUBLICLY FUNDED VACCINATIONS

- The Ministry of Health recently released confirmed extended eligibility for several publicly funded vaccinations.
- These extensions for 2024 describe missed doses for **School Vaccines** (Hep B, HPV-9, and Men-C-ACYW135), **Adult Vaccines** (HZ), and **High-Risk program Vaccines** (HPV-9, 4CMenB, and Men-C-ACYW135)
 - This document indicates the applicable vaccines for continued access for missed doses beyond age or grade-based eligibility criteria and outlines eligible cohorts, and the timeframe individuals must receive missed vaccine doses.
 - Since several vaccines have age- or grade-based eligibility, some individuals may have missed their opportunity to receive the recommended vaccines under the publicly funded program resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS REVIEW

- SWPH's Vaccine Preventable Diseases team will conduct an extensive, complete immunization record review for all students attending elementary schools to ensure compliance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act ([ISPA](#)) immediately.
- **An elementary school suspension date of MARCH 20 2024** is being planned.
- Any student who remains outstanding (vaccination status or providing SWPH with an up-to-date vaccination record) will be suspended from attending school for 20 days at which point it may be extended.
- **ACTION:** Prepare for increased requests for vaccines because of this process.
 - Vaccine orders can be placed and picked up on a weekly basis (if approved fridge temperatures are provided and a preconditioned transport carrier is presented at pick up).
 - Report immunizations [online](#), in person at 1230 Talbot Street in St. Thomas or 410 Buller Street in Woodstock, or by mail.
 - Immunization records are to be provided to families at **no cost** in accordance with the Health Insurance Act (HIA) and its regulations.
 - **Per the Ministry of Health**, the request by a school or health unit for a record of immunization to the parent is not a request to the physician for documentation and does not make the documentation of the immunization service uninsured.
 - **Under S. 24 (1.1) of Regulation 552 under the HIA**, the production, completion or transmission of a patient's immunization status is insured as part of an insured service when this information is:
 - required as evidence of immunization status for admission to or continued attendance in a daycare or preschool program or a school, community college, university or other educational institution or program; or
 - required to receive anything under a program administered by the Minister of Health.