



ONTARIO CAMPS ASSOCIATION

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Measles Preparedness at Camp: Key Insights from the OCA Lunch & Learn

Measles at Camp Lunch and Learn hosted on **May 12, 2025**, by the **Ontario Camps Association Health Committee**, featuring **Dr. Daniel Warshafsky**, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health, and **Jack Goodman** (OCA Advisor):

Session Overview

This session addressed rising concerns around measles in Ontario and provided guidance for camps to prepare for, identify, and manage potential cases in the summer of 2025. The session was not recorded to allow open discussion and included Q&A from both pre-submitted and live questions.

Key Takeaways

1. What Happens If There's a Positive Measles Case?

- **Vaccinated (2 doses):** No action needed. Individuals are considered immune.
 - **Partially vaccinated (1 dose):** Must receive a second dose to be considered immune and can then return to camp.
 - **Unvaccinated or unknown status:** Must **isolate for 21 days** from last exposure. Likely sent home if isolation on-site isn't feasible.
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2. Vaccination Records – Are They Required?

- **Not legislatively required** for camps but **strongly recommended**.
- In the event of a case, anyone without **verified records** will be excluded.
- Valid records include:

- Yellow immunization card;
 - Physician or Public Health printout with **vaccine name, date, and dose info**;
 - Exemption documentation (still treated as unvaccinated in outbreak).
 - Birth before **1970 (Canada)** typically implies immunity.
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3. Testing & Public Health Unit (PHU) Involvement

- Testing is done via **Nasopharyngeal or throat swab and urine sample**—usually off-site (e.g., hospital).
 - Asymptomatic individuals don't need testing;
 - PHUs' will make recommendations on who should get tested and support with supplies/logistics
 - Once a case is confirmed, PHU leads **contact tracing and exclusion decisions**.
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4. Exposure Window & Identifying Contacts

- Measles is infectious **4 days before to 4 days after rash** appears.
 - Individuals are most infectious **before rash**, often with viral symptoms (cough, fever, runny nose).
 - Anyone in the same enclosed space (e.g., dining hall) may be considered exposed.
 - Incubation period: **up to 21 days**.
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5. Policies, Communication and Panic Prevention

- Be **transparent** with staff and families about:
 - Risks;
 - Required immunizations;
 - Isolation policies.
 - Provide **clear policies** for immunization, non-refunds, and consequences of non-compliance.
 - Use **non-judgmental** language while emphasizing **protection of community health**.
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Medical Information and Tools

Signs and Symptoms of Measles

- Viral prodrome: **cough, runny nose, fever, conjunctivitis**;
- **Rash** appears ~3–5 days later, typically spreading from face to body;
- White mouth spots (Koplik spots) may appear before rash;
- Rash may vary in those partially immunized.

Differential Diagnoses

- Viral exanthems (e.g., rubella, roseola);
- Drug eruptions;
- COVID or other viral illnesses.

Confirmation in Remote Locations

- Use PCR swabs (Nasopharyngeal or throat & urine).
- Can be ordered via PHU or tested at hospital.
- Call ahead if sending a symptomatic camper to a clinic or ER.

Use of Pictograms/Posters

- Dr. Warshafsky will share visual guides for symptoms to post in Health Centres.
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Immunization Documentation Guidance

What Camps Are Doing:

- Many camps are reviewing all **staff and camper records**.
- Some are **making record submission mandatory**; others highly recommend it.
- Public Health requires **official documentation** — verbal confirmation is not accepted.
- **Unknown status**: Individuals should **receive vaccine again** or get **serology** (antibody blood test).

Staff-Specific Notes

- Staff born before 1970 – no vaccine required.
- Those born between **1970–1996** may only have 1 dose—should get 2nd.
- Encourage camp staff to keep immunization record readily available even if they do not submit it in the event of a positive case.
- Serology can be accepted if positive, but not always reliable.

- Booster not needed if 2 documented doses are present.
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Contact Tracing & Isolation

- PHU will manage contact tracing; camps must provide **camper/staff lists with DOBs and addresses**.
 - Exposed, unvaccinated individuals must **isolate for 21 days**.
 - Isolation **at camp** may be possible if safe and approved by PHU.
 - Travel post-exposure (e.g., by plane) must be cleared by PHU—air travel **likely not permitted** during isolation.
 - **Visitors Day:** Not a major concern as guests leave after the day—focus remains on staff and campers.
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Final Reminders

- **Start collecting immunization records now**—especially for international staff/campers.
- Include **immunization consent and information sharing clauses** in health forms.
- Contact your **local PHU** for support—they are partners, not inspectors.
- Use this as a **chance to prepare**, not panic.