First Nations Health Authority
270 – 177 Victoria St.
Prince George, BC, V2L 5R8

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To Families and School Staff: What you need to know about measles

Measles is spreading in BC right now. This letter has important information to help keep your child, your family, and our schools safe. Measles is a sickness that spreads easily, but we can help stop it with vaccines and knowing what to do if we're exposed to it.

Vaccines help protect us

Getting the measles vaccine is the best way to stay safe!

People are protected if they:

- got **two measles vaccines (shots)** after turning 1 year old,
- were born **before 1970**, or
- were diagnosed with measles before.

Check if you or your child got both vaccines:	If you or your child need vaccination:
• check online at BC Health Gateway (https://www.healthgateway.gov.bc.ca) • call your local Community Health Centre or Health Unit.	Book an appointment at your local: Community Health Centre, Health Unit (https://www.northernhealth.ca/find-a-facility/health-units), or pharmacy

What measles looks like

Symptoms of measles show up **7 to 21 days** after being near someone who has measles (if you catch the virus). These symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red or watery eyes
- A rash that starts on the face and neck, then spreads

Measles spreads through the air when someone with measles breathes, coughs or sneezes. Measles can make people very sick by causing problems with breathing or in the brain, and sometimes it can be deadly.

If you think your child has measles symptoms

- Do not send your child to school.
- Call **your doctor** or the **Northern Health Virtual Clinic at 1-844-645-7811**.
- Try to keep your child away from other people during this time.
- If you need to go to the doctor or hospital, call ahead so they can get ready.

If someone has measles

They should stay home and away from other people until at least 4 days after the rash starts. This helps stop the sickness from spreading. If you need to go to the doctor or hospital, please call first so the staff can get ready.

If measles exposure happens at school	If your child gets sick at school
If there is exposure to measles at your school, public health will send a letter to the school to send home. It will tell you: • Where to get vaccines • Information about testing, preventive treatment, and care • That anyone not immune to measles should stay home for **21 days** to keep others safe	If your child feels sick at school, staff will call you – just like normal. If there is concern about measles, school staff will call public health for advice. Based on this advice, school staff may help that person go home quickly. While waiting, your child may wear a mask and stay in a separate room. You can call **your doctor** or the **Northern Health Virtual Clinic** at **1-844-645-7811** to assess you and see if you should be tested for measles.

Extra care for some people

Measles can be very dangerous for people who are not protected, and who are pregnant or have weak immune systems. If you are worried about the health of your child or family member related to measles, call **your doctor** or the **Northern Health Virtual Clinic** right away. They can help you get care and medicine to stay safe.

More information

- https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/measles
- http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/measles
- https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/measles
- Northern Health Virtual Clinic: 1-844-645-7811

Let's work together to stop the spread of measles and keep our schools and families safe.

With thanks and in partnership,

Northern Director of Nursing, on behalf of
First Nations Health Authority Public Health Doctors (Medical Health Officers)

Regional Nursing Lead – Healthy Schools, on behalf of
Northern Health Public Health Doctors (Medical Health Officers)

First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

northern health
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