



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

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Health Care Provider Alert - Increased risk of measles and other infectious diseases related to travel

Situation

COVID-19 made it harder for people to get preventive health care, like vaccines. Because of this, it is estimated that world-wide, 61 million doses of measles vaccine were postponed or missed during the pandemic. Due to the increased number of unimmunized people, cases of measles have been on the rise globally.

Travelers are at risk of exposure as measles can spread easily through the air when sharing enclosed spaces with others throughout their trip. Travel not only exposes individuals to outbreaks and diseases that are currently impacting the country being visited, but additionally exposes individuals to travelers from other countries.

The Government of Canada has issued a [low-level risk alert for measles](#), and recommends routine vaccines and hand hygiene to prevent it. Note that other diseases, like monkeypox, polio, COVID-19, and Zika virus require higher levels of precaution as they are considered a level 2 risk (higher than measles).

Actions

- Ask patients about their travel history and consider testing for contagious diseases outside of the norm.
- Follow current testing guidance [Test Information Index | Public Health Ontario](#) as use of the wrong test can result in delayed diagnosis, delayed treatment and inadequate control measures (e.g. for measles, PCR testing is definitive but serology may provide ambiguous results).
- Notify Northwestern Health Unit when you suspect or confirm any [Disease of Public Health Significance](#).

Northwestern Health Unit can also link health care providers to Infectious Disease specialist assistance as needed.

For more information, please contact:

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