



Dr. Ibrahim Khan
Medical Health Officer
Indigenous Services Canada
Saskatchewan Region
1783 Hamilton Street
Regina, SK S4P 2B6
Office: (306) 564-9175

Dr. Nnamdi Ndubuka
Medical Health Officer
Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority
Chief Joseph Custer I.R. #201
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Office Complex
Prince Albert, SK. S6V 6Z1
Office: (306) 953-5000

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RE: Measles: information for Parents, Guardians and Staff of Daycares and Schools

As the children have started into their fall season routines, this is a reminder of the seriousness of measles. Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral infection that is spread by direct and airborne routes. Through the immunization program, Canada eliminated measles in 1998 (SK CD Manual, 2019), however, due to travel and importation, sporadic cases still arise. Immunization is the best defense and in order to achieve community immunity, 95% of the community would need to have immunity through vaccination with a measles containing vaccine or natural immunity. If community immunity has not been met, susceptible individuals and communities remain at risk of acquiring the disease. This is not a theoretical concern as we know that many children missed some or all of their immunizations during COVID-19, and not all have been caught up.

Saskatchewan measles cases have increased in recent months. Measles can cause symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes and a blotchy, red rash. Serious complications of measles can include pneumonia, hearing loss, blindness, and intellectual disability. Children younger than 5 years old, people with weakened immune systems, and pregnant individuals (including the unborn baby) are especially at risk of severe illness.

Measles is preventable through immunization. High vaccination coverage helps to protect vulnerable individuals who are at greater risk of severe complications from measles.

All children who attend schools or childcare facilities and staff born since 1970 are strongly encouraged to have their immunization records accessible. Proof of immunity may be required to continue to attend and work in schools or childcare facilities in the event there is a measles exposure in your facility.

Measles Immunization Recommendations:

Routine immunization for measles should continue to be offered according to the immunization schedule in the Saskatchewan Immunization Manual (SIM), with measles containing vaccines being provided to infants at 12 months and 18 months of age.

Parents should be reminded that vaccinated individuals may not be protected against measles until at least 2 weeks post-immunization. The measles vaccine is very effective – after 1 dose, 95% of people are protected, and after 2 doses, 99% of people are protected.

For more information or questions related to measles immunization, please contact:

- Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority: Pauline (Sunshine) Dreaver, Public Health Nurse by phone 306-953-5039 or email sdreaver@nitha.com
- Indigenous Services Canada: Janelle Michel, Regional Immunization Coordinator by phone 639-560-4210 or email Janelle.michel-gottschall@sac-isc-qc.ca.



For more information or questions related to management and prevention of measles cases, please contact:

- Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority: James Piad, CDC Nurse by phone 306-953-5025 or email jpiad@nitha.com
- Indigenous Services Canada: Valerie Skiba Regional Communicable Disease Manager by phone 639-560-4532 or by email valerie.skiba@sac-isc.gc.ca.