

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Healthcare providers in office/outpatient settings

From: Dr. Ryan Sommers, Senior Medical Officer of Health, Eastern Zone

Date: April 3, 2025

Re: **Measles testing pathways in Eastern Zone**

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The purpose of this memo is to advise providers in office/outpatient settings about measles testing pathways in Eastern Zone to diagnose and manage suspect measles cases. For more information on measles symptoms, epidemiology, prevention, and occupational health considerations, please refer to [memo on measles](#) sent February 27, 2025.

**Clinical Considerations and Testing Protocol**

Measles is an exceptionally contagious viral infection. As a proactive measure, screening for symptoms or concerns should be incorporated when booking appointments whenever feasible.

If you suspect measles and the patient presents ill at an appointment, or if an urgent end of day appointment can be arranged, **collecting samples in your office is the most preferred approach**. This minimizes exposure within the healthcare system and reduces delays in diagnosis. Our primary objective remains to contain transmission and alleviate the burden on the broader community.

**Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Measures**

Healthcare providers must take the following precautions when managing suspected measles cases:

- Isolate the patient in a single room immediately
- Conduct a Point of Care Risk Assessment before providing care
- Use the most appropriate PPE when caring for a suspected or confirmed measles patient (typically, gown, gloves, and fit-tested N-95 respirator; refer to IPAC link below).

For more information about Physician Office IPAC management of suspected measles cases, please refer to this [NSH IPAC document](#). Information regarding measles screening, testing, vaccines and Occupational Health guidance can also be found on the [ERIN HUB](#).

**Specimen Collection and Public Health Notification**

- As required by [It's the Law](#), **immediately report all suspect and confirmed measles cases to EZ Public Health by phone at 902-563-2400 (Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30 pm) or After Hours at 902-473-2222** and ask to speak with the EZ Public Health Nurse On-Call.

- If specimen collection occurs in an outpatient/office setting, **please prioritize Measles PCR** (nasopharyngeal swab AND urine) and immediately notify EZ Public Health
- If the office is unable to collect samples, immediately notify EZ Public Health and the Health Protection Team will prioritize the patient to alternate local testing options.

Efforts are being made to limit the presence of patients under investigation in waiting areas, particularly in emergency departments. If a suspected measles case requires urgent clinical evaluation and must be sent to the emergency department, please notify the receiving healthcare facility (and EHS, if applicable) in advance to emergency department (and EHS if needed) in advance.

### Alternate Testing Pathways for Patients Without a Primary Care Provider

- Mobile Primary Care Clinics - [Mobile Primary Care Clinics | Nova Scotia Health](#)
- Virtual care for primary assessment - [VirtualCareNS | Nova Scotia Health](#)
- Public Health Mobile Unit – preferred for patients with transportation barriers, in-home testing. Please phone to EZ Public Health to arrange an appointment.

### Alternate Key Contacts

- IPAC: Contact [Your Infection Control Team](#)
- OHS: Contact your local NSH OHS Office or [OHSWMatters@nshealth.ca](mailto:OHSWMatters@nshealth.ca)
- Laboratory/Medical Microbiology: Contact the Medical Microbiologist on call at 902-473-2222 or [CZMicrobiologist@nshealth.ca](mailto:CZMicrobiologist@nshealth.ca)

### Appendix: Diagnostic Testing for Measles

LABORATORY TESTING AND SAMPLE TYPE			
	Specimens to be Collected	Specimen Containers	Test Request
Acute Illness	1) Nasopharyngeal swab / aspirate or throat swab = collect as soon as possible from rash onset (within 7 days). <u>AND</u> 2) Urine = collect within 14 days of rash onset.	1) Viral Transport Medium <u>AND</u> 2) Urine = 10 mL in a sterile container	Request <b>Measles PCR</b> for swab and urine.
Refrigerate samples at 4°C and send promptly to the Central Zone Laboratory at the QEII HSC. <b>For acute illness samples:</b> Notify Janice Pettipas at <a href="mailto:Janice.Pettipas@nshealth.ca">Janice.Pettipas@nshealth.ca</a> if a sample is being sent. <b>After hours:</b> Inform the Microbiologist on-call at 902-473-2222.			