

The Regional Municipality of Halton

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2008



Halton Region Issues Warning for Measles

The Halton Region Health Department has been notified that an Oakville man in his thirties has tested positive for measles. The test was confirmed by the Provincial Public Health Laboratory on April 1, 2008. The individual was potentially infectious from March 21 through to March 30.

The risk for the general public is considered low because most people are immune to measles as a result of past illness and Canada's high immunization rates.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that is spread through coughing, sneezing, or talking and by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions. A person with measles is contagious from approximately three to five days before the rash appears to approximately four days after.

"Although measles is easily transmitted, individuals who have had one dose of the measles vaccine are 85 to 95% likely to be immune and those who have had two doses of the vaccine are considered virtually 100% likely to be immune," said Dr. Monir Taha, Associate Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region. "Also, anyone born prior to 1970 is considered to be naturally immune to the disease."

The signs and symptoms of measles include fever; cough; runny nose; red, burning, teary eyes; white spots on the inner lining of the mouth; and a rash which starts on day three to five of the illness and can last up to six days.

During the contagious period, the individual was unaware of his diagnosis and visited the following places:

-
- Halton Healthcare Services, Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH), in the Maternal Child Department between March 21 and March 26, and at the OTMH Breastfeeding Clinic between 9:30 a.m. and 12 noon on March 29.
 - Oak Park Medical Clinic located on Sixth Line, Oakville on the afternoon of March 27 and again on the evening of March 28.

Halton Region Health Department staff is contacting patients seen at the clinic and working with hospital officials to identify potential exposures that occurred at OTMH.

“It is important to note that newborns of immune mothers are very unlikely to become infected because of the transfer of protective antibodies from their mothers,” says Dr. Tom Szakacs, Infectious Diseases Consultant at HHS.

The individual also visited:

- Toronto Raptors’ Game in the Air Canada Centre, Toronto, March 23, section 320, row 15, seats 20 and 21.
- 2:30 pm GO Train from Oakville Trafalgar Station to Union Station Sunday, March 23. Seated approximately in the middle of the train, 2nd level, in the middle of the car.
- 6:43 pm GO Train from Union Station to Oakville Trafalgar Station, Sunday, March 23. Seated approximately in the middle of the train, 2nd level, in the middle of the car.
- First Choice Hair Cutters on 2423 Trafalgar Road in Oakville on March 24 during the late afternoon.

The risk of getting infected with measles in a public setting is very low. A person who visited these places at the times listed above has only a very small chance of

becoming ill with measles even if he or she has never had measles or has never been immunized against measles.

Should such a person develop illness as described above, then the person should seek the advice of a physician. It is important to call ahead to make an appointment and to be sure to explain that you may have been exposed to measles. In this way your physician can arrange to see you without exposing others. An assessment by a physician and blood tests are required to confirm the diagnosis.

For patients without a family physician, please call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

For more information, call Halton Region Health Department, 905-825-6000 or visit www.halton.ca/health. For questions concerning Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, call 905-845-2571, ext. 6788. If you live in the City of Toronto, please call 416-338-7600.

The Regional Municipality of Halton serves more than 430,000 residents in the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, and the Town of Oakville. Halton Region is committed to meeting the needs of its residents through the delivery of cost-effective, quality programs and services, including water and wastewater; Regional roads and planning; emergency medical services; waste management; public health; Ontario Works (formerly social assistance); children's and seniors' services; social/non-profit housing; heritage programs; emergency management and business development. For more information, visit Halton Region's website at www.halton.ca.

For info on Halton Region Health Department's activities and response:

Media Contact:

Jeff Crowder

Communications Specialist

Halton Region

905-825-6000, x7968

Alternate Contact

Sharon Little

Manager, Communications

Halton Region

905-825-6000, x7576

For information on Halton Healthcare Services' activities and response:

Trish Carlton

Director, Public Relations & Health Promotion

905-845-2571, ext. 4668

For information on Toronto Public Health's activities and response:

Susan Sperling

Media Relations Coordinator

Toronto Public Health

416-338-7974