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Export date: Fri Oct 30 7:49:23 2026 / +0000 GMT

First local case of measles confirmed by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) is warning the community about the circulation of measles.

The local public health unit announced in a press release on Monday (March 3), that they have confirmed a local case of measles and a case of an individual from outside the region, who attended an event in Guelph in February.

?This is part of a trend of increasing cases of measles identified in multiple jurisdictions across Ontario,? said Dr. Nicola Mercer, WDGPH's Medical Officer of Health and CEO. ?Measles is extremely contagious ? particularly among unvaccinated people ? and can be very dangerous, especially for infants under one year of age. With March Break on the horizon, it is important to be vigilant and protect yourself and your family.?

WDGPH said they are following up with anyone who may have been exposed to either case.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that spreads through the air from person to person when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. The virus can remain active for as long as two hours after a contagious person has left an area and can spread to others before the infected individual starts to show symptoms.

Common signs and symptoms of measles include fever, runny nose, cough, red watery eyes (conjunctivitis), tiny white spots inside the mouth (Koplik's spots), and a red blotchy rash that starts on the face and spreads over the rest of the body.

According to Public Health Ontario, there were 101 confirmed cases of measles reported in Ontario between 2013 and 2023, while in 2024 there were 64 cases reported.

As of Feb. 26, there have been 119 confirmed and 23 probable cases of measles reported in Ontario.

WDG Public Health noted in its press release that the best way to prevent measles is to get vaccinated.

Children routinely receive the measles vaccine at 12 months of age and again between ages 4 and 6. With two doses, the vaccine is nearly 100 per cent effective at preventing measles.

Those experiencing symptoms of measles or anyone who has questions are recommended to contact their healthcare provider or visit the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health website for more information.