



MAR 29 2019

MR. TOM BEAULIEU
MLA, TU NEDHE - WIILIDEH

Oral Question 636-18(3): Measles Vaccine

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 28, 2019 regarding the Measles Vaccine.

There is no increased risk of harm in receiving an extra dose of the measles vaccine. Canadian immunization programs have used measles vaccines since the early 1970s and their safety has been established. Severe reactions are very rare, about one per million people vaccinated develop a severe reaction such as severe allergy. People may develop pain or redness at the injection site, and about 5% of those immunized develop a mild fever or rash about one to three weeks after immunization.

The measles vaccine in the Northwest Territories is provided in two doses. One dose is given at 12 months of age, as the vaccine is more effective than those given earlier. Infants between 6 and 12 months are recommended to receive the measles vaccine if there has been exposure to the measles or they are travelling to a place where measles is common. Measles vaccines are not recommended before 6 months of age as they are ineffective.

The second measles dose is typically given at three years of age to coincide with well-child services for that age group; however doses can be safely given four weeks apart starting at age 12 months.

The measles vaccine is not given to pregnant women or those whose immune systems are weakened due to illness or medicines (like chemotherapy).

The measles vaccine was licensed in Canada in 1963 and in early 1970s there was widespread use of the one dose measles immunization program. People who were born before 1970 are generally considered to be immune due to exposure to the illness. Illness provides long-standing immunity.

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Residents should contact their local public health unit or health care provider if they are not sure whether they or their children are adequately immunized.

Thank you.



Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator, Executive