



San Francisco Department of Public Health

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Making Travel Plans?

Make sure you're immunized against measles

Public health departments urge vaccination before international travel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN FRANCISCO (April 29, 2019) – All international travelers should ensure they have received the recommended two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Nationally, as of today, measles cases now total 704 in 2019, the highest since 1994, and 38 of those cases have occurred in California. Most of these cases have been linked back to international travel and subsequent spread among unvaccinated persons in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps and rubella. All children should get two doses of MMR vaccine, the first dose at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. For those travelling internationally with a baby 6-11 months of age, the CDC recommends that the baby receive an early dose of MMR vaccine. Children 12 months of age and older that will be traveling internationally should receive two doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days, prior to travel. Adults traveling internationally should get vaccinated with two doses of measles vaccine if they did not receive the two doses as children. Vaccination is the best protection against measles.

“Serious complications can result from measles, and vaccination is key to prevention,” said Dr. Julie Stoltey, Communicable Disease Controller for San Francisco. “There are measles outbreaks happening in many parts of the world, and all international travelers should take steps to protect themselves, their families, and their communities. Making sure you’ve had two doses of the MMR vaccine is a safe and effective way to prevent measles.”

Talk to your doctor or travel medicine provider about travel immunizations at least 4-6 weeks before traveling. More information about recommended MMR vaccination for travelers is located on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mmr/public/index.html>.

Measles is still common in many parts of the world. The international travel associated with the 2019 California cases has involved India, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam and the Ukraine. While most people recover fully from measles, serious complications can and do



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occur, and infants, young children, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems who contract measles are at the highest risk of having serious complications.

Measles immunization with MMR vaccine is available at most healthcare provider offices, local pharmacies, and at the AITC Immunization & Travel Clinic (www.sfchcp.org/AITC). You can also search for vaccination providers on Vaccine Finder: <https://vaccinefinder.org/>.

In response to measles cases in the Bay Area, the San Francisco Department of Public Health has implemented strategies to control the spread of this disease, including:

- Identifying people who may have been exposed to measles and ensuring they are immune to measles.
- Preventing possible spread of measles to others by limiting activities of people who are not immune and who may have been exposed.
- Isolating people who are infectious to prevent the spread of measles to others.
- Strongly advising individuals who are not immune to receive the measles vaccine.
- Consulting with local health care providers regarding suspect measles cases and helping ensure appropriate testing if indicated.
- Notifying the public through postings and local media of specific public locations where measles exposures may have occurred.

Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90 percent of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. A person with measles can spread the disease to others even before they have any symptoms. A person can develop measles from 7 to 21 days after being exposed to someone who is contagious with measles. Common symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a rash.

If you are unsure of your immunization status or may have had contact with someone with measles, consult with your doctor. If you develop symptoms of measles, it is very important to **call ahead to any medical facility** before going there and tell them that you may have been exposed to measles, so that the facility can take measures to protect other patients and visitors.

For more information about measles, visit: <https://www.sfchcp.org/infectious-diseases-a-to-z/measles/>.

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