



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEASLES VACCINATIONS AND TRAVEL

BE AWARE AND PREPARED

STOCKTON, CA (April 17, 2019) – Measles continues to garner widespread attention. As of April 11, there have been 555 cases of confirmed measles infection in the U.S. and 21 cases in California. Dr. Gordon Arakawa, Assistant Public Health Officer of San Joaquin County states, “At this time, San Joaquin County Public Health Services reports no confirmed cases of measles within the County.”

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease with transmission occurring when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Measles starts with high fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes and sore throat. A rash breaks out three to five days later. Affected persons are infectious four days prior to the rash and up to four days after the rash appears.

Measles can be a serious illness in all age groups but children younger than five years and adults are more likely to suffer from serious complications. Serious complications include pneumonia (1 out of 20 measles cases in children) and encephalitis (swelling of the brain, affecting 1 out of 1000 measles cases in children).

We know that the large majority of the recent measles cases in California are associated with individuals who have travelled to and/or from countries in which measles is common. These cases include both the primary travelers as well as unvaccinated individuals exposed to those travelers.

Anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk of becoming infected during international travel. Another point to remember is that even if you travel domestically, you have a chance of becoming exposed if you spend time in large airports that serve as hubs for international travel or if you fly on a plane with an international traveler infected by measles.

Before international travel, the CDC recommends:

1. Infants 6 through 11 months of age should receive one dose of MMR vaccine. Infants who get one dose of MMR before their first birthday should get two more doses – one at age 12 to 15 months and another dose at least 28 days later.
2. Children 12 months of age and older should receive two doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.
3. Teenagers and adults who are not pregnant and who do not have evidence of immunity to measles* should get two doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.

Before domestic airline travel, follow general CDC recommendations:

1. Children should receive a first dose of MMR at 12 to 15 months of age with a second dose at 4 through 6 years of age.
2. Teenagers and adults who are NOT pregnant and do not have evidence of immunity to measles*, should get two doses of MMR separated by at least 28 days.

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*Acceptable presumptive evidence of immunity against measles includes at least one of the following:

1. Written documentation of adequate vaccination
2. Laboratory evidence of immunity
3. Laboratory confirmation of measles infection
4. Birth in the U.S. before 1957

The arrival of travel season stresses the need to confirm or acquire immunity to measles. Given today's modern ease of visiting foreign countries, the risk of spreading a contagious disease such as measles is ever-present. Don't forget that protective immunity from measles after immunization takes 10-14 days to develop. So, just as you plan ahead for a trip purchasing clothes and organizing luggage options, confirm your measles immunity or get vaccinated before you travel.

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