

Headline	Traveling abroad? Make sure you're immunized against measles	
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Traveling abroad? Make sure you're immunized against measles

WASHINGTON, DC — People planning to travel internationally should ensure they have already received the recommended two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Nationwide, measles cases now total 704 in 2019, the highest since 1994. Nearly all of these cases have been linked to international travel by unvaccinated people who have then spread the virus to unvaccinated populations in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends two doses of MMR vaccine: the first dose at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. Adults travelling internationally should get vaccinated for measles if they did not receive the two doses as children. Vaccination is the best protection against measles.

Talk to your doctor about travel immunizations at least 4-6 weeks before traveling. For those travelling internationally with a baby older than 6 months but younger than 12 months, the CDC recommends that the baby receive an early dose of MMR vaccine. Infants and young children who contract measles are at risk of serious complications.

“The best way to protect yourself and your family from measles is by making sure that you are vaccinated,” said Solano County Health Officer Dr. Bela Matyas.

“The vaccine is highly effective and can keep you protected for life. When a high percentage of our residents is vaccinated, the disease cannot easily be passed on to anyone. This is called ‘herd immunity’ and it gives protection to vulnerable people such as young children and those who are too sick to be vaccinated.”

Measles is still common in many parts of the world: in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, South America, and Africa, including the Philippines, Israel, India, and Ukraine. If you are planning a trip, protect yourself against diseases that are more common in the country you are visiting.

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 symptoms appear.

The incubation period for developing measles is up to 21 days after being exposed to someone else who has the disease. Common symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a rash, which can appear 7 to 21 days after the exposure.

Talk to your doctor about getting the MMR vaccine before traveling. Measles immunizations are available at your healthcare provider, local pharmacy, or health clinic. Locate a place that offers the measles vaccine on Vaccine Finder: <https://vaccinefinder.org/>

If you are unsure of your immunization status or may have had contact with someone with the measles, consult with your doctor to have a test to check for measles immunity or to receive immunization.

It is very important to **call ahead to any medical facility** before going there and to tell them that you may have been exposed to measles, so that the facility can take measures to protect other patients and visitors.