

Travel Essential: Measles Vaccination



IMAGE OF CHILD WITH MEASLES: PHIL ID#12785

Are you getting ready to travel abroad for spring break or this summer? Will you be traveling with an infant or small child?

If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, it’s important to ask yourself one more question: Are you and your family protected against measles?

Measles can be brought into the United States from any country where the disease still occurs or where outbreaks are occurring, including Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. In recent years, many measles cases have been brought into the United States from common U.S. travel destinations, such as England, France, Germany, India, and, during 2014, from the Philippines and Vietnam. Worldwide, some 20 million people get measles each year; about 146,000 die.

Every year, unvaccinated people get measles while abroad and bring it to the United States. This has sometimes led to outbreaks. For example, the 2014-2015 measles outbreak linked to a U.S. amusement park likely began with an infected person returning or visiting from abroad.

[Measles can be a very serious, even life-threatening disease.](#) It can cause pneumonia or leave a person deaf or brain damaged. Very young children and adults who are not vaccinated are at particularly high risk of serious measles complications.

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. It takes two doses, given at least 28 days apart, to be 97% effective. The CDC recommends infants 6 months through 11 months of age receive one dose of MMR vaccine [BEFORE traveling abroad.](#) Children age 12 months or older should get two doses of MMR vaccine, given at least 28 days apart, [BEFORE](#) international travel. Adolescents and adults who have not had measles or been vaccinated should get 2 doses, separated by at least 28 days, [BEFORE](#) traveling.

Whatever time of year you plan to travel outside the United States, always remember to check your vaccinations before you leave. But even if your family does not plan to travel, you never know when you might come into contact with someone who has measles. Anyone not protected against measles is at risk.

To learn about measles vaccination visit <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccination.html>. And check out CDC’s “Measles Outbreak: Protect Your Child with MMR Vaccine,” at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Measles/>.