



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recommendation: Protect Against Measles before International Travel

SACRAMENTO - With the spring holidays approaching in the next weeks, many Californians are heading to the Philippines or other countries where measles outbreaks are occurring or measles circulates in the population. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) strongly encourages all Californians to make sure they are protected against measles and other dangerous diseases before they go abroad.

“Measles is extremely contagious and can be very serious. The best way to protect yourself and your family against measles is with the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination, which is 97 percent effective after two doses,” says Dr. Gil Chavez, deputy director of the CDPH Center for Infectious Disease Prevention and state epidemiologist. “Vaccination is especially important for those who plan to travel internationally, which places them at high risk of getting the disease and spreading it to others after they come home.”

The current outbreak beginning in December 2014 is likely to have started from a traveler who got measles overseas. Most cases of measles in the United States in 2014 were associated with travel to and from the Philippines, where measles has been widespread. Other cases were associated with travel elsewhere in Asia, Europe or Africa. Measles has also been spread at international airports.

Immunization with MMR vaccine protects against measles while abroad and back at home. Unvaccinated Californians who are traveling outside of North or South America should receive the MMR vaccine before they go. Infants who are traveling abroad can be vaccinated with an early dose as young as six months of age (though they should also have the two standard doses of the MMR at 12-15 months and at 4-6 years of age).

Check with your health care provider to see whether you and your family are fully protected against measles, influenza and other diseases that are common in other countries. Travelers can find helpful information about the vaccinations needed on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#).

Travelers should also watch for the symptoms of measles after returning home. Measles begins with a fever that lasts for a couple of days, followed by a cough, runny nose, red, watery eyes, and rash. The rash typically appears first on the face, along the hairline, and behind the ears and then affects the rest of the body. If you think you or a family member may have measles, promptly contact your health care provider by telephone before entering a medical facility, where the disease could spread to others.

More information about measles is available on the [CDPH website](#).

www.cdph.ca.gov

