



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

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Protect Yourself and Your Children Against Measles Before International Travel

(Woodland, CA) – The number of people infected with measles has increased worldwide as a result of fewer people receiving recommended vaccines amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Since December 2023, multiple California residents, including one individual who may have exposed hundreds of patients at a Sacramento County hospital earlier this month, have returned from international travel infected with the measles virus.

Measles, a highly contagious viral illness, can lead to severe health complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), and death, particularly in unvaccinated individuals. The virus spreads through contact with infectious droplets or airborne transmission when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. The virus can remain infectious in the air and on surfaces for one to two hours after an infected person has left the area. Symptoms typically start with fever, cough, runny nose, and pink eye, followed by a rash two to four days later. People with measles are contagious from four days before the onset of the rash until four days after.

Measles is preventable through vaccination. The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) and MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella) vaccines are highly effective, with one dose preventing measles in 93% of recipients and two doses in 97%. In the United States, children usually receive measles vaccines at 12 months old and again at 4-6 years old.

Individuals planning travel, especially internationally, with children should consult their healthcare provider to ensure they are fully vaccinated against measles. Allow at least 2 weeks between vaccination and departure to allow the immune system to respond.

- Infants 6 to 11 months old should receive one dose of MMR vaccine before international travel.
- Children aged 12 months and older should receive their first MMR dose immediately if not already done, and a second dose 28 days later to ensure full vaccination before travel.
- Teens and adults lacking two doses of MMR vaccine should receive these vaccinations before international travel. Adults born before 1957 are generally considered immune to measles and do not require MMR vaccination before travel.

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To learn more about measles, please visit www.CDC.gov/Measles. Nearly all health insurance plans are required to provide MMR vaccines at no cost. For a list of clinics that offer free or low-cost immunizations for persons who are uninsured or underinsured, call 2-1-1 or visit www.YoloCounty.org/ImmunizationClinics.

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