



Epidemiological Alert:

Recommendations to the travelers to preserve the Americas without Measles or Rubella

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PAHO/WHO recommends vaccination against measles and rubella for all travelers visiting countries in the Americas.

Due to various cultural and sporting events that will be hosted by countries in the Americas, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) urges all travelers visiting any country in the Region to get vaccinated for measles and rubella before arriving in the Americas, in order to reduce the risk of reintroducing these diseases that have already been eliminated in the Americas.

PAHO also recommends that any resident of the Americas planning to travel to other regions of the world should be protected against measles and rubella prior to departing on their trip. Travelers who have not been vaccinated against measles and rubella are at risk of contracting these diseases when visiting countries where the viruses are currently circulating. Special efforts should be made to ensure vaccination for women of childbearing age in order to prevent possible infections caused by the rubella virus during pregnancy.

Evidence of immunity to measles and rubella for international travelers includes:

- written documentation of having received the measles and rubella vaccines.
- laboratory evidence of rubella and measles immunity (a positive serologic test for the measles and rubella-specific IgG antibodies)

Travelers over 6 months old who are unable to provide the indicated documents are advised to obtain vaccination for measles and rubella or preferably the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. Ideally, the vaccine should be administered at least two weeks **before** departure.

There are exceptions to these instructions for travelers that present medical indications that they should not undergo vaccination for measles and rubella. Infants under 6 months old should not be vaccinated. Infants that receive the MMR vaccine before their first birthday must be revaccinated according to the vaccination schedule in their country.

For the duration of the trip and upon returning to their point of origin, travelers should take notice of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Rash
- Cough, coryza (runny nose), or conjunctivitis (red eyes)

If the traveler believes that they have measles or rubella, they should do the following:

- Remain in the place where they are lodging (hotel, home, etc.) except to go to a doctor. They should not travel nor go to any public places.
- Avoid close contact with other people for seven days following onset of rash.

The epidemiological surveillance system should include the **private healthcare sector** and private healthcare facilities that provide medical attention to tourists since people who can afford to take international trips are more likely to seek medical attention in private healthcare facilities.

Therefore, PAHO recommends alerting healthcare workers in both the private and public sectors to the possible presence of both diseases, and reminding them that such findings must be notified immediately in order to ensure a rapid response.

In addition to the measures already mentioned, PAHO encourages the practice of requiring **proof of immunity** for measles and rubella as a pre-requisite to employment in the **healthcare sector** (medical, administrative and security personnel). Additionally, PAHO recommends that personnel in the **tourism and transportation sectors** also be immune to measles and rubella.