



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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Travelers encouraged to get vaccinations before going abroad *Immunizations help international travelers stay healthy*

DENVER--As spring break and summer approach, Joni Reynolds, director of public health programs at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, advises international travelers to be up-to-date on their routine immunizations and receive vaccinations recommended for the region where they will be traveling. It is important to get vaccinated four to six weeks prior to traveling, since it can take weeks after the vaccination for your body to create adequate immunity to the disease.

Travelers should seek expert advice from providers that specialize in travel medicine, which may be at a private doctor's office, hospital or local public health clinic. Travel health experts frequently are updated on vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization. Such providers also can educate travelers about disease outbreaks, unsafe areas for tourist travel, and safe food and water precautions, or offer specific information for individuals with prior health conditions such as diabetes.

Reynolds said, "It is important for international travelers to protect themselves against diseases that are prevalent in certain parts of the world. Diseases like polio and malaria may not exist in the U.S. anymore, but they do in many countries. We also have had cases of Americans contracting measles while traveling in Europe, so it's vital to be up to date on more routine vaccinations like measles, as well."

There are three classifications of travel vaccinations:

- **Routine vaccines** are the standard vaccines and booster shots recommended for children and adults. All travelers should be up to date according to recommendations for their age group, because diseases covered by these vaccines that now are rare or nonexistent in the U.S. are still common in other areas of the world.
- **Recommended vaccines** are the vaccines that travelers might want to receive for travel to certain countries or regions. A typhoid vaccine might be recommended for a trip to India, or the Japanese encephalitis vaccine may be recommended for parts of Asia. Even though those vaccines are recommended, travelers still will be allowed to enter the country without getting vaccinated.
- **Required vaccines** are the vaccines required to enter the country. Travelers must show either written proof of vaccination, or a doctor's note exempting them or their

child from the vaccine. The yellow fever vaccine is required for travelers heading to parts of South America and Africa.

To find a local travel immunization clinic, please visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's website: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization/travel.html>.

Please visit the CDC's "Destinations" page to learn specific health information for the country you are visiting: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm.