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### **International Travelers: Make Sure You Have Your Measles Vaccine**

LANSING – Following a recent measles case in Michigan, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is advising all residents to make certain they are protected against the disease. In early May, an unvaccinated 8 month-old Michigan infant who traveled with family members to Pakistan was diagnosed with the illness upon returning home.

Infants as young as 6 months of age who will be traveling abroad should receive a dose of measles vaccine at least two weeks before departure because of the high risk associated with travel, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Two measles vaccine doses are routinely given in childhood, at 1 year of age and the other at 4-6 years of age.

“Measles is a very rare disease in the U.S., but is quite common in many parts of the world. Travel is a risk for anyone not immune to measles, which is extremely contagious,” said Dr. Matthew Davis, Chief Medical Executive with the MDCH. “Recent outbreaks have been reported in other parts of the world. With the summer travel season at hand it is especially important that travelers be protected.”

Measles spreads through coughing and sneezing. The disease is characterized by a red, raised rash. The rash is preceded by a high fever, red and watery eyes, coughing, and runny nose. The time between exposure to the virus and the rash appearing is about two weeks.

The disease was once so common that virtually everyone had it in childhood. Millions of cases occurred every year in the U.S., with between 400 and 500 measles-related deaths annually. The licensure of a measles vaccine in 1963, followed by its routine use in childhood, resulted in a steady decline in cases in the U.S. In 2000, measles was certified as eliminated in this country. All Michigan residents, including adults and adolescents, should check with their physician to make sure they have been protected against measles and other important vaccine-preventable diseases.

“Measles can be prevented through vaccination. This is an important reminder that anyone who is going to travel outside of the U.S. should get a dose of measles vaccine, as should anyone who is uncertain of their measles immunity status,” said Dr. Davis. “If you have questions about whether you should get vaccinated against measles, please contact your health care provider.”

The measles vaccine and other vaccines have been proven to be highly effective and very safe. In the U.S., measles vaccine is given as a combination vaccine known as MMR that also protects against mumps and rubella. For more information about measles or the vaccine, visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/measles](http://www.cdc.gov/measles).

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