

Recommendations to maintain the Americas free of measles and rubella

11 March 2014

The Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) recommends that all residents of the Americas travelling to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, including delegation members, tourists and media personnel, be fully vaccinated against measles and rubella, to maintain the elimination of both diseases in the Region. The countries of the Americas region have been free of measles and rubella since 2002 and 2009, respectively.

Considering the high risk of measles and rubella virus importations into the Americas, and in preparation for the upcoming 2014 FIFA World Cup, to be held in Brazil on June 12 - July 13, PAHO/WHO urges to national authorities to take the following actions:

1. Travelers

Prior to departure

1. PAHO/WHO recommends that Member States advise all travelers over the age of 6 months (with the exceptions noted below) to be vaccinated against measles and rubella, preferably with the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. Ideally, the vaccine should be administered at least **two weeks before** departure.
2. Infants who receive the MMR vaccine before their first birthday must be revaccinated according to their country's vaccination schedule.
3. Travelers who are not up to date on their vaccinations are at higher risk of contracting either disease when in close contact with travelers from countries where the viruses still circulate.
4. Exceptions to this recommendation include persons with medical contraindications to the measles and rubella vaccine. Additionally, infants under the age of 6 months should not be vaccinated.
5. Persons considered immune to measles and rubella, that is, those who can present:
 - written documentation of having received a measles and rubella vaccination; **or**
 - laboratory confirmation of rubella and measles immunity (a positive serological test for the measles and rubella-specific IgG antibodies).

During the trip

1. Ensure that travelers are aware of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Rash

- Cough, coryza (runny nose), or conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Joint pain
- Lymphadenopathy (swollen glands)

2. If travelers suspect they have measles or rubella, they should:

- Remain at the site of their current residence (hotel or home, etc.) except when seeking professional health care. They should not travel or go out to public places, nor self-medicate.
- Avoid close contact with other people for seven days following rash onset.

If travelers need medical attention **while in Brazil**, they should seek assistance from the nearest health service facility or contact local health authorities using the following toll free number: **192**

Information on health care services provided by the Brazilian authorities is available at: www.saude.gov.br/viajante

Upon returning

1. If travelers suspect they have measles or rubella, they should seek for professional health care and remain at the site of their current residence.
2. If travelers developed any of the above mentioned symptoms, they should inform about their travel history to the physician.

2. Health care workers

1. PAHO/WHO encourages the practice of requiring proof of immunity to measles and rubella as a pre-requisite for employment in the health care sector (medical, administrative and security personnel).
2. Sensitize private sector personnel on the need to immediately report any suspected measles or rubella cases, since international travelers may seek medical attention at private health care facilities. Prompt reporting of these diseases will permit a timely response from the national surveillance system.

3. Persons and institutions in contact with travelers, before and/or after the trip:

PAHO/WHO recommends that Member States take the following actions with regard to individuals and institutions that may have contact with travelers before and/or after the trip:

1. Advise personnel in the tourism, transportation and media sectors to be fully immunized against measles and rubella.

2. Request the dissemination of these recommendations through travel agencies, authorized centers for FIFA's ticketing and other tourism-related agencies, so that travelers know to take necessary actions prior to their trip.
3. Conduct public education campaigns on the symptoms of measles and rubella, so travelers with symptoms know to seek immediate medical care. Information should be distributed at airports, ports, bus stations, travel agencies, airlines, etc..

4. Useful links:

PAHO's Immunization web site

http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=956&Itemid=358&lang=es

Health's traveler web site – Ministry of Health, Brazil

<http://portalsaude.saude.gov.br/index.php/cidadao/viajante>

Measles/Rubella epidemiological bulletin, Regional Office for Euro (WHO-EURO)

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/measles-and-rubella/publications/who-epibrief-and-who-epidata/latest-who-epibrief>

Matches and host cities, FIFA World Cup

<http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/matches/index.html>