

Hawaii Epi Bulletin

HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DISEASE OUTBREAK CONTROL DIVISION

Winter 2018/2019

Traveler's Health



Traveling can be an incredibly fun and fulfilling experience. However, it is important to remember that traveling, especially to destinations outside of the United States, can expose you to health risks that you may not normally encounter at home. For example, a trip to certain regions of Mexico or South America could potentially expose you to mosquitos infected with Zika virus, or you might be planning a visit to England while there is an ongoing measles outbreak. These risks should not stop you from traveling, but you should ensure that taking steps to protect your health while traveling is part of your travel preparation process.

One of the most important steps that you can take to protect yourself while traveling is to make sure your vaccinations are up-to-date, and determine if there are any additional vaccines recommended or

required based on your travel destination. The vaccinations that would be required or recommended for your trip will depend on where you are going, what activities you have planned, and your medical history or other health concerns. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintain a [Traveler's Health website](#) which you can search by country and find destination specific information on recommended or required vaccinations, as well as other destination specific health information. You should also discuss your travel itinerary with your primary healthcare provider. They would be able to determine if there are additional recommendations based on your personal medical history and also would be able to

ensure that your vaccinations are up-to-date.

If additional vaccinations are required, there are several options of where they could be obtained. For routine vaccinations, your primary healthcare provider should be able to provide them, however, for some less common vaccines you may need to visit a travel clinic or have them specially ordered (for example, the yellow fever vaccine may not always be readily available). You should plan on getting your travel vaccinations at least one month before your trip. This will allow enough time for the vaccines to provide you protection against the diseases. Additionally, because some of the vaccines may not be immediately available or only be available from certain clinics that may be far from where you are, planning ahead of time will ensure you are able to get the recommended/required vaccinations in time for your trip.

Vaccine preventable diseases are not the only health risks that may be present while traveling, but there are ways to mitigate those risks as well. For example, if traveling to a region with mosquito-borne diseases, such as Zika or dengue, you can protect yourself by taking actions such as using EPA approved insect repellent and wearing clothes that cover your arms and legs to protect yourself from mosquito bites. Making sure to wash your hands frequently and being careful about what foods and drink you consume can also help reduce your risk of getting sick from foodborne diseases and other illnesses. Events such as natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes could also have an effect on your health. CDC's Traveler's Health website also has a [section where travel health notices are posted](#) about any current health issues and recommendations to travelers that arise from events such as disease outbreaks, special events, or natural disasters that could have an effect on health.

By making the protection of your health a part of your travel preparation process, you can greatly reduce your risk of getting sick during your trip. Taking the extra time to make sure your vaccines are up-to-date and making sure you are aware of other potential health risks will help ensure a successful and healthy trip.

Routine vaccines are those that are recommended for everyone in the United States based on their age, health condition, or other risk factors. You may think of these as the childhood vaccines that you get before starting school, but some are routinely recommended for adults, and some are recommended every year (like the flu vaccine) or every 10 years (like the tetanus booster for adults).

A **required vaccine** is one that travelers must have in order to enter a country, based on that country's government regulations. In most circumstances, yellow fever is the only vaccine required by certain countries. Keep in mind that yellow fever vaccine can be recommended by CDC to protect your health, as well as required by a country. CDC's recommendation is different from the country's requirement. A vaccine recommendation is designed to keep you from getting yellow fever; a vaccine requirement is the country's attempt to keep travelers from bringing the yellow fever virus into the country. Vaccine requirements can change at any time, because country governments control those decisions.

Recommended vaccines are those that CDC recommends travelers get to protect their health, even though they aren't required for entry by the government of the country you are visiting. Recommended vaccines are not part of the routine vaccination schedule. They protect travelers from illnesses that are usually travel-related. For example, a typhoid vaccine can prevent typhoid, a serious disease spread by contaminated food and water, which is not usually found in the United States. The vaccines recommended for a traveler depend on several things, including age, health, and itinerary.

From: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-vaccines>

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This timely report of surveillance and laboratory activities from the Disease Outbreak Control Division of the Hawaii State Department of Health contains information on investigations in progress and/or diagnoses that may not yet be confirmed. The **Hawaii Epi Bulletin** is intended primarily for the use of the public health professionals, should be considered proprietary, and should **NOT be distributed** further.

Protect Yourself from the Flu

The Coordinator's Corner
Influenza Surveillance and Response

The 2018–19 flu season is currently underway. Take the following actions to protect yourself and others from the flu:

- Get a flu vaccine. A yearly flu vaccine is the most important step and effective way to protect against flu viruses. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every season. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illness, prevent serious complications associated with chronic medical conditions, and reduce the risk of flu-related hospitalizations. Getting vaccinated can protect not only yourself, but also the people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness. CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine by the end of October before flu begins spreading in your community, but it is never too late to get vaccinated.
- Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs by avoiding close contact with sick people and limiting contact with others while you are sick. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands often with soap and water, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Take antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them. If you get sick with the flu, antivirals can be used to make your illness milder and shorten the duration you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications and hospitalization.



Timeline of the outbreak investigation of the *Escherichia coli* outbreak associated with romaine lettuce, 2018–2019



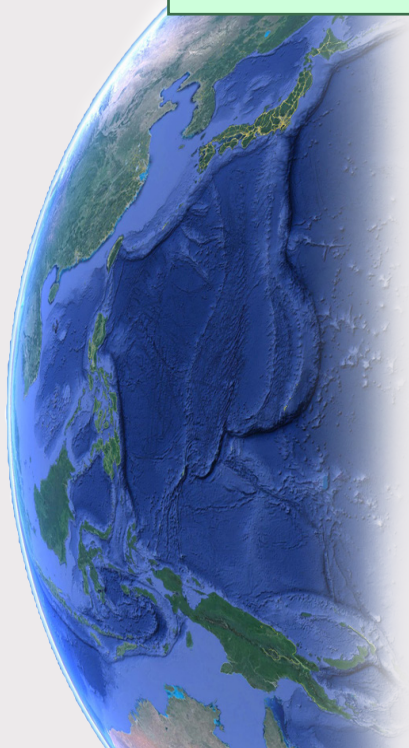
The recent outbreak of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 affected 62 people, 25 of whom were hospitalized and 2 developed hemolytic uremic syndrome. There were no deaths. The outbreak spanned across 16 states (no cases were identified in Hawaii) and was declared over by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on January 9, 2019. Investigation into this outbreak began in November 2018 when the CDC was analyzing biological fingerprints of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases all over the nation and found several people were infected with the same strain. The CDC worked with State Health Departments to get more information about possible exposures within the people with matching strains. Generally, during an investigation, as more information becomes available, a clearer picture can develop. During this particular investigation, it was found that 30 of 36 (86%) people who were able to provide information on food items they consumed 1–8 days prior to becoming ill, indicated they ate romaine lettuce. This was a significantly higher

consumption percentage than other foods people mentioned consuming prior to illness. However, not everyone knew where the romaine lettuce they ate came from. The CDC decided to inform the public at this point, even though they didn't know where the contaminated romaine lettuce originated, to alert consumers to the potential hazard, especially before the Thanksgiving holiday occurred. The investigation focused on following up on any new cases linked to this outbreak strain, finding persons who remembered the brand of romaine lettuce they bought and ate, or identifying someone who had leftover foods able to be tested. By December 13, 2018, CDC and the Food and Drug Administration were able to identify Adam Bros Farming in Santa Barbara County, California as the farm where the contaminated lettuce was grown and distributed. All red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce, and cauliflower harvested between November 27 and November 30, 2018 at this farm were recalled, included food items that were sold to other distributors for pre-packaged foods (like premade sandwiches) which contained these recalled items. Once it was confirmed that no lettuce that was harvested from this farm was able to be sold any more (lettuce only lasts up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator), the outbreak was declared over, and consumers were notified that there were no longer any known contaminated heads of lettuce for sale.

You can take action to avoid getting sick with *E. Coli* by: washing your hands before you eat, rinsing off fresh produce before eating, cooking foods to proper temperatures before eating (steak and roasts to 145° F, ground beef and pork to 160° F), not preparing food for others when you are ill, and avoiding cross contamination when working with raw food items.

You can also regularly check the FDA website on recalls associated with food items at this website:
<https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Recalls/default.htm>

Updates from the Pacific



Dengue

- Dengue outbreaks are ongoing in **New Caledonia** (serotype-2), **Palau** (serotype-3), and **Nauru** (serotype-1).
- A laboratory confirmed case with no previous travel history was reported from **Vanuatu**.

Conjunctivitis

- An increase in cases of conjunctivitis has been reported by **Fiji** (Fiji last had an outbreak of conjunctivitis in 2016).

Influenza

- Influenza activity has been increasing in **Guam**. Since the beginning of December 2018, there have been 144 cases of influenza reported.

Norovirus

- A norovirus outbreak that had been ongoing in **Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia**, is declared over. The number of reported cases has returned to baseline levels. (Report received January 14, 2019)

HDOH Hawaii Health Care Provider Disease Reporting Categories

Confidential

Infections/diseases which may carry a social stigma are to be reported with extra precautions to assure patient confidentiality. Reports are to be submitted within three working days of diagnosis.

Urgent

Diseases or conditions that are suspicious or presenting with novel symptoms that may or may not be part of a known disease or disease complex, labeled "urgent" shall be reported by telephone as soon as a provisional diagnosis is established.

The telephone report shall be followed by a written report submitted by mail or fax within three days to the Disease Outbreak Control Division, Disease Investigation Branch on Oahu or to the District Health Office on the neighbor islands.

Routine

Diseases labelled "routine" shall be reported by mail, by telephone, or fax to the Disease Outbreak Control Division, Disease Investigation Branch on Oahu or to the District Health Office on the neighbor islands.

Routine/Enteric (enteric prevention priority)

Diseases labeled "routine—enteric prevention priority" shall be reported by telephone as soon as a working diagnosis is established if the individual case is a food handler, direct care provider, or pre-school-aged child. Otherwise, routine reports may be submitted.

Outbreak Reports

Any disease shall be reported by telephone when observed to occur clearly in excess of normal expectancy as determined by the healthcare provider or the Director of Health. The telephone report shall be followed by a written report submitted by mail or fax within three days to the Disease Outbreak Control Division, on Oahu, or to the District Health Office on the neighbor islands.

HDOH Telephone Numbers

Oahu (Disease Investigation Branch)
(808) 586-4586

Maui District Health Office
(808) 984-8213

Kauai District Health Office
(808) 241-3563

Big Island DHO (Hilo)
(808) 933-0912

Big Island DHO (Kona)
(808) 322-4877

After hours (Oahu)
(808) 600-3625

After hours (Neighbor islands)
(808) 360-2575



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