



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

BRUCE S. ANDERSON, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2019

19-085

Hawai'i Department of Health advises travelers to be on alert for measles

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is advising travelers to be on alert for measles as international outbreaks around the Pacific and elsewhere continue to increase. This year, there were four reported cases of travel-related measles in Hawai'i including three visitors and one resident. In 2018, there were no reported cases of measles in the state. An advisory was sent to physicians in November, and healthcare providers are reminded to be vigilant.

Measles is very contagious and can be serious. It is spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Persons most at risk for catching measles are those who are not vaccinated. Possible serious complications include pneumonia, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), and death. The risk of complications is highest in children who are less than a year old, pregnant women, and persons who have a weakened immune system.

"Measles is still common in many parts of the world, and current outbreaks in areas around the Pacific and on the mainland are a concern because Hawai'i is a cornerstone for travel and many of our residents are frequent travelers," said Health Director Bruce Anderson. "Infectious diseases are just a plane ride away, and vaccination is the best defense against these life-threatening diseases."

The best way to prevent measles is to get vaccinated with the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. DOH encourages everyone to check their records and contact their healthcare provider if they need to be immunized. Before any international travel, infants ages 6 through 11 months should receive one dose of MMR vaccine. Children ages 12 months and older, as well as teenagers and adults without evidence of immunity, should receive two doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.

The symptoms of measles usually start around 14 days after exposure (range 7–21 days) and may include:

- High fever
- Cough; runny nose; and red, watery eyes
- Rash

People who suspect that they have measles should call their healthcare provider right away and isolate themselves from others to help contain the spread of illness.

For a list of vaccinating pharmacies, visit <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/vaccines-immunizations/vaccine-locators/>.

For more information about measles, visit http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/measles/.

#