



Public Health Division  
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# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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## Press Release

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### **MAKING TRAVEL PLANS? MAKE SURE YOU'RE IMMUNIZED AGAINST MEASLES Public Health Departments Urge Vaccination Before International Travel**

**County of Santa Cruz, CA** – As travel season approaches, Santa Cruz County residents should ensure they are protected against measles. Nationwide, measles cases now total 704 in 2019, the highest since 1994. Nearly all these cases have been linked back to international travel by unvaccinated people and subsequent spread in unvaccinated populations in the U.S. So, protection against measles is especially critical for those who plan to travel internationally and for those in communities that might have lower vaccination rates.

“Measles is a highly contagious and potentially serious disease. In the U.S., about 1 in 4 people who get measles will be hospitalized. Luckily, measles is also preventable through a safe, effective, and widely available vaccine,” Jennifer Herrera, Santa Cruz County’s Director of Nursing. “The vaccine protects you as well as vulnerable babies and community members with medical conditions who can’t be vaccinated.”

For both adults and children, completing the recommended two doses of the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine is the best protection against measles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends two doses of MMR vaccine for everyone: the first dose at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. If you are unsure of your immunization status consult with your doctor. Adults should get vaccinated for measles if they did not receive the two doses as children.

Travelers should talk to their doctor about travel vaccinations at least 4-6 weeks before traveling. Infants and young children who contract measles are more at risk of serious complications. Therefore, for those travelling internationally with a baby older than 6 months but younger than 12 months, the CDC recommends that the baby receive an early dose of MMR vaccine. Infants who get one dose of MMR vaccine before their first birthday should still get two more doses at the regularly recommended intervals.

Measles is still very common in many parts of the world in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, South America, and Africa, including the Philippines, Israel, India, and the Ukraine. More information about recommended vaccines for travelers is located on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mmr/public/index.html>.

If you may have had contact with someone with measles, it is very important to **call ahead to any medical facility. Do not enter the building** until the facility has had the opportunity to take actions to protect other patients and visitors.

Measles vaccines are available at your healthcare provider, local pharmacy, or health clinic. You can find local pharmacies that offer the measles vaccine on Vaccine Finder: <https://vaccinefinder.org/>. The County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency offers vaccinations for infants, children, teenagers, and adults. More information can be found at [www.santacruzhealth.org/izservices](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/izservices)

Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90 percent of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. The virus can linger in the air for up to two hours after a person with measles has left. A person with measles can spread the disease to others even before they have any symptoms. A person develops measles from 7 to 21 days after being exposed to someone who is contagious with measles. Common symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a rash that starts on the head and moves down the body.

The County of Santa Cruz Public Health Division is preparing with local medical providers as well as the state's health department to take care of our community.

For more information about measles, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/index.html>

The County of Santa Cruz Public Health Division also makes available information about measles for doctors: <http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HealthAlerts.aspx>

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Santa Cruz County**