

Measles outbreaks have CDC tweaking travel guidelines

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As millions of Americans prepare to travel abroad this summer and measles outbreaks increase worldwide, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tightened its guidance on how travelers

should handle the potential health threat.

Americans planning to fly to other countries should consult their doctors at least **six weeks** before they leave, if they are unsure about whether they are up to date on their measles vaccines, the [guidance](#) now says.

That's two weeks earlier than the one month advance notice the CDC [said](#) in November would be needed in order to have enough time to get vaccinated.

Russia and Malaysia have also been added to the CDC's [map](#) of 46 countries now facing large [measles outbreaks](#). However, the agency warns that the global rise in [measles cases](#) remains a threat in other parts of the world.

"Measles spreads rapidly and may become a risk to travelers in places not included on the list above. CDC recommends all travelers are fully vaccinated against measles when traveling to any international destination," the agency stressed in its guidance.

In recent weeks, [health authorities](#) have ramped up their plea for Americans to get vaccinated before traveling this year.

Officials have cited recent outbreaks linked to travelers who were infected abroad and had been eligible to be vaccinated, *CBS News* reported.

Those include a cluster of cases reported over the winter in [Philadelphia](#) linked to an unvaccinated baby. The infant had been old enough to get a shot of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Another occurred in Idaho, which state health authorities linked to an unvaccinated adult who traveled to Europe, *CBS News* reported.

"The World Health Organization has noted a significant increase in measles cases worldwide, with a 30-fold increase in Europe. This includes popular international tourist destinations for Americans, like England," the CDC [said](#) in a report released earlier this month.

Two doses of MMR vaccine offers 97% protection against measles, the CDC [says](#), while one dose offers 93% protection. The protection is lifelong, experts say.

Most Americans got two doses of the vaccine by the time they were 6, though vaccination rates have slipped in recent years.

In the United States, state and local health authorities have announced at least 55 confirmed or suspected cases of measles so far this year across 17 states, *CBS News* reported.

That is close to the 58 total measles cases the CDC says were reported for all of 2023. The last peak of annual measles cases was in 2019, when 1,274 infections were reported, *CBS News* reported.

Most new cases in the past week have been in Chicago, where health authorities have been trying to stem an outbreak in a migrant shelter. New infections have also been announced over the past week in [California](#) and Arizona.

A spokesperson for the California Department of Public Health told *CBS News* there were four reported measles cases statewide, and that "cases have been linked to travel to countries with epidemics in the wake of decreased routine immunization."

Meanwhile, officials in Arizona's Coconino County also [announced](#) a new case on March 11. Three previous infections were reported this year in Arizona's Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, but the new case

wasn't linked to those or to international travel, *CBS News* reported.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [measles](#).

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