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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Health Care Practitioners
From: Dr. Isaac Benowitz, State Epidemiologist
Subject: Travel-Related Diseases, Spring 2024
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Travel-Related Diseases, Spring 2024

Background

Many Maine residents travel to warmer climates with heightened risk of mosquito-borne or other types of illness particularly during colder months and especially during school and other spring vacations occurring this time of year. In 2024, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) has investigated multiple cases of travel-related illness in persons who have recently traveled within or outside the United States. At the same time, many jurisdictions both within and outside the U.S. are reporting increased incidence of diseases such as hepatitis A, measles, and dengue.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Travelers

U.S. CDC provides extensive information for the public to assist them in preparing for domestic and overseas travel. Health care practitioners should share this information with those who plan to travel. The information can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/traveler-information-center>.

Many travel-related illnesses can be prevented by keeping up with recommended vaccinations. U.S. CDC recommends vaccines, medicines, and also provides information about other health risks based on travel destination. These recommendations are available at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

Basic infection prevention activities also reduce the risk of travel-related illness. These include hand washing, masking, and respiratory hygiene. Avoiding raw or undercooked foods, particularly meat, fish, and shellfish, as well as being aware of the quality of drinking water, can also help reduce illness. When water quality is

unknown, whether it is while hiking, camping, or traveling, it may be necessary to disinfect the water before using it for cooking, washing food, making drinks or ice, brushing teeth, or drinking.

Additionally, travelers should take precautions to prevent bites from mosquitoes, ticks, and animals that may carry disease. These precautions include wearing pants and long-sleeved garments, using EPA-approved repellants, sleeping under bed nets, and keeping distance from wildlife, particularly if the animal is displaying unusual behavior.

Travel-Related Disease Assessment

The Maine CDC recommends that clinicians obtain recent patient travel history, especially travel outside of the U.S.

Clinicians should refer to the current list of U.S. CDC Travel Health Notices, found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>, to identify travel destinations with elevated risk for various diseases such as malaria, dengue, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF), or multi-drug resistant salmonella.

Disease Reporting

All immediately notifiable conditions must be reported to Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821. All other notifiable conditions should be reported by electronic lab reporting, fax, or by phone. The current list of Maine Notifiable Diseases and Conditions can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/disease-reporting/index.shtml>

For More Information

- U.S. CDC: Travel Health Notices: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>
- Maine CDC: Measles: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vaccine/measles.shtml>
- Information for health care providers:
 - Dengue: <https://www.cdc.gov/dengue/healthcare-providers/index.html>
 - Hepatitis A: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>
 - Malaria: https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/diagnosis_treatment/clinicians1.html
 - Measles: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>
 - Rabies: https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/specific_groups/hcp/index.html
 - Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever: <https://www.cdc.gov/rmsf/healthcare-providers/index.html>
 - Salmonella: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/general/technical.html>
 - Shigellosis: <https://www.cdc.gov/shigella/audience-medical-professionals.html>
 - Vibriosis: <https://www.cdc.gov/vibrio/healthcare.html>