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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

With Measles Cases Rising, Advice from Health Plan of San Joaquin

Health Plan of San Joaquin's Chief Medical Officer, Lakshmi Dhanvanthari, MD, is a board-certified pediatrician. Dr. Lakshmi has an important message for all parents, whether or not they are members of HPSJ, the largest local, non-profit public health plan – "Measles is making a comeback because people are traveling to and returning from countries that still have measles. Measles is preventable through vaccination. If you are a parent, please be sure your child's measles vaccine is up-to-date."

Doctors thought they had mostly wiped out measles in this country in 2000. But there have been outbreaks here since then, especially this year. Here's why.

- Most people who get measles are not vaccinated.
- Measles is still common in other

countries.

- When unvaccinated people from the U.S. travel to other countries, they can get measles. And when they return, they can spread this very contagious disease.

Know the symptoms

- Measles starts with a fever, a cough, a runny nose, and red eyes. Next, a rash of red spots breaks out all over the body.
 - Kids with measles may also get an ear infection. Or they may have diarrhea.
 - Measles is so contagious, it can linger in the air even after a person carrying the disease has left the area.
 - And it can be serious. It can cause pneumonia and swelling of the brain. Some kids even die from measles. Protect your child with the Measles Vaccine
- It's safe and effective. And it's a

combination vaccine. It protects against measles, mumps, and German measles. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children need two doses of the vaccine.

- First dose: 12 to 15 months of age
 - Second dose: 4 to 6 years of age
- For those children that did not receive it during this time frame, check with your doctor for a catch-up schedule. "Adults and teens may also need the measles vaccine," said Dr. Lakshmi. "Ask your doctor if you or your child should get one. If needed, the CDC recommends 2 doses, separated by at least 28 days."

Here's the bottom line

Anyone who is not protected by immunization, including children too young to be vaccinated, are at risk of measles infection. That is why it is so



Lakshmi Dhanvanthari, MD

important to be up to date on vaccinations, including before traveling to other parts of the world where measles is still common. Before traveling abroad, check with the CDC, which maintains current travel notices on its website, www.cdc.gov/travel/notices.

<http://bdweb8960p.bluedomino.com/pdf/May2019.pdf>