

## Travel Medicine Advisory Bahamas -- March 2020

November, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This Travel Medicine Advisory is issued by the Chen Health & Wellness Center to alert you to some important medical issues as you plan for the trip to The Bahamas in March 2020. Travel medicine advice is also available at the Travelers' Health website of The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>. We encourage you to look over the health information provided by this website.

*For this trip to The Bahamas, we recommend your child should:*

- *Be up to date on all of the routine childhood immunizations.*
- *Receive influenza vaccine, if not already received.*
- *Receive Hepatitis A and Typhoid vaccines or appropriate boosters, if they have not already received them.*
- *Protect self from bug bites (mosquitos, ticks and fleas) which can be vectors of disease*
  - *Appropriately use an insect repellent containing at least 30% DEET.*
  - *Wear long sleeve shirts, pants and a hat when possible. Consider permethrin treated clothing.*
  - *Use air conditioning and bed nets when available.*
  - *Check body for ticks at the end of every day.*
  - *Shower daily, thoroughly and soon after walking in any wooded, bushy or grassy areas.*
  - *Stay in center of hiking trails. Avoid high grass and bushes.*
- *Bring an antibiotic to be taken in case of Traveler's Diarrhea.*
- *Protect self from sun exposure by appropriately using sunscreen ( $\geq 30$  SPF) and, when possible, wearing long sleeves and a hat.*

There is risk of exposure in the Bahamas to diseases and health problems beyond those preventable by vaccines. The CDC website <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/the-bahamas> outlines some of these health risks.

There is a risk of contracting the mosquito borne viral diseases (such as Zika and Dengue) while in The Bahamas. The importance of preventing these illnesses with DEET and mosquito bite prevention are outlined at the following sites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Dengue/>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/zika>

Please consult these sites to obtain a perspective on the health risks in traveling to The Bahamas.

Our nurse practitioner, Ms. Cara Soifer, or I will meet with all students going on this trip individually in January to review their health history including medical problems, medications, allergies and immunizations. We will update any needed immunizations at that time and determine a Traveler's Diarrhea medication. We typically recommend azithromycin (commonly known as a "Z-pak") as a Traveler's Diarrhea medication.

Please complete and sign the enclosed Travel Health Questionnaire by December 9<sup>th</sup>. If vaccines are needed, charges will be billed to your child's student account. Medication will be billed to your child's health insurance, though coverage may vary.

If you want to schedule an appointment with your child's PCP or with a travel medicine practitioner to receive immunizations, medication and travel advice, please do so during the Winter Vacation.

Please understand that although some illnesses may begin during travel, others may occur weeks, months, or even years after return. If your child becomes ill after their trip, particularly within 6 months of their return, they should be preferentially evaluated by a physician versed in travel-related illness.

If you have questions, please contact me by email (please put *Bahamas trip* in the subject line).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryant E. Benson MD".

Bryant E. Benson, MD  
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Chen Health and Wellness Center  
Deerfield Academy  
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