

Travel Medicine Advisory Dominican Republic -- June 2020

November, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This Travel Medicine Advisory is issued by the Chen Health and Wellness Center to alert you to some important medical issues as you plan for the trip to the Dominican Republic in June 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 to look over the health information provided by this website.

For this trip to the Dominican Republic, 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.*
- *Take chemoprophylaxis for malaria (i.e., take medication before, during and after the trip to prevent malaria). Drugs recommended by the CDC include chloroquine, atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline or mefloquine. Malaria is a serious illness and may occur for up to one year after visiting an endemic area; therefore, if your child becomes ill with a fever for up to one year after their trip, you should have them see a physician immediately and inform them of your child's travel history.*
- *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 (≥ 30 SPF) and, when possible, wearing long sleeves and a hat.*

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

There is a risk of contracting the mosquito borne diseases (such as Zika, Malaria and Dengue) while in the Dominican Republic. 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/page/zika-information>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites>

Please consult these sites to obtain a perspective on the health risks in traveling to the Dominican Republic.

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

Please complete and sign the enclosed Travel Health Questionnaire by December 9th. 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 an upcoming 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 *DR trip* in the subject line).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryant E. Benson MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear "MD" at the end.

Bryant E. Benson, MD
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