

Travel Medicine Advisory Tanzania -- March 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 Tanzania 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 Tanzania, we recommend your child should:

- *Be up to date on all of the routine childhood immunizations.*
- *Receive Hepatitis A and Typhoid vaccines or appropriate boosters, if they have not already received them.*
- *Receive influenza vaccine, if not already received.*
- *Take chemoprophylaxis for malaria (i.e., take medication before, during and after the trip to prevent malaria). Drugs recommended by the CDC include 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 a risk of contracting the mosquito borne diseases (such as Chikungunya, Dengue and Malaria) while in Tanzania. The importance of preventing these illnesses with DEET and mosquito bite prevention, are outlined at the following sites:

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

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

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

Since 2015 Tanzania has been experiencing an ongoing cholera outbreak. Cholera is related to poor sanitation and hand hygiene and causes severe, vomiting, diarrhea and dehydration. While cases have significantly declined the outbreak continues. There is currently no posted outbreak in the areas of Tanzania included on our itinerary. We have communicated and confirmed with our trip partners that facilities where our students are staying have good sanitation practices. Of note, the itinerary has not substantially changed in the past few years and we have had no issues. While in Tanzania, we will encourage all our students to wash their hands thoroughly and frequently, not to eat street or undercooked/raw food, practice appropriate sanitary measures and good hygiene. While these interventions will decrease risk it cannot be eliminated. Please review the following CDC website for more information regarding cholera: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/cholera>

There is risk of exposure in Tanzania to other diseases and health problems beyond those preventable by vaccines. The CDC website <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/tanzania/> outlines some of these health risks. Please consult this site to obtain a perspective on the health risks in traveling to Tanzania.

Our nurse practitioner, Ms. Cara Soifer, or I will meet with all students going on this trip individually in January and February 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.

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

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.

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 *Tanzania 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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