

Travel Medicine Advisory
Panama
March 2024

October 2023

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 your child's trip to Panama in March 2024. Travel medicine advice is also available at the [Travelers' Health website of The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

For this trip to Panama, we recommend your child should:

- *Be up to date on all of their routine childhood immunizations*
- *Receive Hepatitis A vaccine and/or appropriate boosters, if they have not already received them.*
- *Receive Typhoid vaccine and/or appropriate boosters, if they have not already received them.*
- *Receive annual influenza vaccine, if not already received.*
- *Receive and be [Up-to-date in regards to COVID-19](#) vaccination and boosters.*
- *Reduce their risk of acquiring [Malaria](#) (a serious and sometimes fatal illness that can take up to 1 year to present itself) by taking a daily antibiotic before, during and after the trip.*
- *Receive [Yellow Fever Vaccine](#) to reduce the risk of acquiring [Yellow Fever](#).*
 - ***Please review, sign and return the attached document regarding the Yellow Fever vaccine.***
- *[Protect themselves from bug bites](#) (mosquitos, ticks, sand flies, triatomine "kissing" bug and fleas) which can transmit diseases such as [Denque](#), [Zika](#), [Malaria](#), [Yellow Fever](#), [Chagas Disease](#) and [Leishmaniasis](#).*
 - *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.*
 - *Be extra vigilant during dawn and dusk when mosquitos and other insects are more prone to bite.*
 - *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 themselves from sun exposure](#) by appropriately using sunscreen (≥ 30 SPF) and, when possible, wearing long sleeves and a hat.*
- *Practice [hand hygiene](#) and [safe food/drink choices](#)*
- *Avoid contact with any animal or wildlife (including domesticated pets) unless directly supervised by a trip chaperone.*

Despite the use of vaccines and the above practices to reduce risk of disease, there is still a risk of acquiring serious illness or disease while abroad. We ask that you review the [CDC's website regarding travel to Panama](#) to obtain a better perspective on the potentially serious health risks and disease exposures involved in traveling to this destination. Please feel free to reach out to our office if you have any questions or concerns.

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

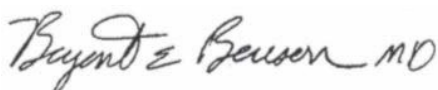
If you want to schedule an appointment with your child's PCP or with a travel medicine specialist to receive immunizations, medication and travel advice, please do so during the Spring Break.

Please complete and sign the enclosed Travel Health Questionnaire by December 4, 2023.

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 within 12 months of returning from their trip, they should be preferentially evaluated by a physician versed in travel-related illness.

If you have questions, please contact me by email (please put *Panama 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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