



Rubella in Japan

Warning - Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel

Alert - Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions

Watch - Level 1, Practice Usual Precautions

Key Points

- There is an outbreak of rubella in Japan.
- Travelers to Japan should make sure they are vaccinated against rubella with the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine before travel.
- Rubella is very dangerous for a pregnant woman and her developing baby. Pregnant women who are not protected against rubella through either vaccination or previous rubella infection should not travel to Japan during this outbreak.

What is rubella?

Rubella, also called German measles, is a disease spread by the coughs and sneezes of infected people. Symptoms include rash and fever for 2–3 days. Rubella is very dangerous for a pregnant woman and her developing baby. If a pregnant woman gets rubella virus, her baby could have birth defects such as deafness, cataracts (blurred vision), heart defects, mental disabilities, and organ damage.

What is the current situation?

Health officials in Japan have reported an outbreak of rubella. Most cases continue to be reported in the Kanto region (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, and Saitama).

What can travelers do to protect themselves?

- Make sure you are fully vaccinated or otherwise protected against rubella.* (note)
- People who cannot show that they were vaccinated or are otherwise protected against rubella should get vaccinated before leaving the United States:
- Infants (6–11 months of age) should have 1 dose of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine.
 - Children in the United States routinely receive MMR vaccination at age 12–15 months.

- Adults and children 1 year of age or older should have 2 doses of MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.

Special Advice for Pregnant Women

When rubella infection occurs during early pregnancy, serious consequences—such as miscarriages, stillbirths, and severe birth defects in infants congenital rubella syndrome, CRS (<https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/pregnancy.html>)—can result. See more about pregnancy and rubella (<https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/pregnancy.html>).

Pregnant women should

- Talk with their healthcare providers before traveling to Japan to check whether they are protected against rubella and whether it is advisable to travel.
- Avoid traveling to Japan during this outbreak if not protected against rubella, through either vaccination or previous rubella infection. This is especially important during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- Get MMR vaccine after they have given birth, if they are not already protected against rubella.

Learn more about preventing rubella and what to do if you think you have it on the rubella page for travelers.

What can clinicians do?

- Check that your patients 6 months of age or older who will be traveling internationally are protected against rubella (<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html#immunity>).
- Think Travel (<https://www.cdc.gov/thinktravel/>): Keep rubella in mind when treating patients with fever and rash, especially if the patient has recently traveled internationally.

Traveler Information

- Rubella Webpage for Travelers
- CDC Rubella Homepage (<https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/index.html>)
- MMR Vaccine Information Statement (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mmr.html>)
- MMRV Vaccine Information Statement (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mmr.html>)

Clinician Information

- Rubella in CDC's Yellow Book (Health Information for International Travel)
- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Recommendations for MMR vaccine (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/mmr.html>) and MMRV vaccine (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/mmr.html>)

- [Rubella Information for Healthcare Professionals \(https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/hcp.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/hcp.html)
- [Think Travel Homepage \(https://www.cdc.gov/thinktravel/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/thinktravel/)

*Those who are otherwise protected include people who were born before 1957 and those who have been tested and have confirmed immunity. Talk to a doctor to see if you are protected against rubella.

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National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/index.html>)

Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (DGMQ) (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dgmq/index.html>)