



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H..
State Surgeon General

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NEWS MEDIA ONLY: TIM O'CONNOR
561-671-4013 or press50@doh.state.fl.us

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RELIEF WORKERS AND OTHERS TRAVELING TO HAITI FOR POST EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

The Palm Beach County Health Department is recommending relief workers and other people traveling to Haiti in the aftermath of the January 12th earthquake to be prepared. Conditions in the area remain hazardous. Anyone departing for Haiti should visit their doctor to follow recommendations from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and ensure all necessary vaccines are up to date to prevent illness.

- Make sure you and travel mates are up to date on vaccines such as **measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT), polio, seasonal and H1N1 flu, and varicella.** It is especially important to have a current **tetanus shot.**
- **Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG):** Even if your departure is imminent, one dose of hepatitis A vaccine provides adequate short-term protection for healthy people. For long term protection, a second dose is required 6–18 months after the first dose, depending on the brand of vaccine used.
- **Typhoid:** There are 2 vaccines available for typhoid prevention. The injectable vaccine may be preferable to the oral vaccine in cases where travel is imminent. The oral vaccine requires refrigeration and 4 tablets taken every other day over one week.
- **Hepatitis B:** If your departure is imminent, the first in a 3-dose series (day 0, 1 month and 6 months) may provide some protection. An accelerated dosing schedule may be used (doses at days 0, 7, and at 21–30 days with a booster at 12 months).
- **Rabies:** If your activities in Haiti will bring you into contact with animals such as dogs, cats, bats, raccoons, or skunks, you should consider pre-exposure rabies vaccination, which is a 3-shot series (days 0, 7, and 21 or 28) given before travel. Even if you receive pre-exposure vaccination, you will still need immediate medical treatment if you are bitten or scratched by an animal.
- **Malaria** occurs in all parts of Haiti. Ways to prevent malaria include the following: Take a prescription antimalarial drug. Use insect repellent and wear long pants and sleeves to prevent mosquito bites. Sleeping in air-conditioned or well-screened rooms or using bed nets. No antimalarial drug is 100% protective, so it is important to use all three ways to prevent malaria

Palm Beach County Health Department Director Alina Alonso, M.D., says, "There are many active hazards relief workers may be exposed to. Good prevention methods are the best defense against contracting illness. In addition there are many recommendations for Americans to follow while in Haiti. This information will be updated regularly online, as we monitor the conditions being reported by officials there."

The full recommendations can be found on the Palm Beach County Health Department website at <http://www.pbchd.com/haiti> or www.CDC.gov. ###



PBCHD Director Alina Alonso, M.D.
Post office Box 29 / 800 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33402
www.pbchd.com