

**For Immediate Release:
Wayne Holmes Emergency Coalition
Submitted by Vaughn Anderson
Holmes County Health Department**

TRAVELING ABROAD—KNOW THE RISKS AND BE PREPARED

Are you planning a trip abroad in the near future? Wayne and Holmes County residents travel extensively overseas for business, pleasure, and mission trips. There are several preventative steps that travelers can take to protect their health and prevent serious disease. Some of these steps require preparation weeks before departure to ensure your health and safety.

The preventative steps are rooted in the following four basic principles:

- Some diseases that are no longer a threat in the United States are serious problems in developing countries.
- Contaminated food and drinks are sources of infection. Typhoid fever, Hepatitis A, and travelers' diarrhea are transmitted in this manner.
- Areas with inadequate sanitation and little access to clean water can pose a serious threat to the health of travelers.
- Some countries may require proof of immunity against certain conditions.

Before departure, travelers should be advised about the risk of disease in the country or countries they plan to visit and about steps to take to prevent illness. Special factors to consider include the traveler's age, gender, immunization status, medical problems, itinerary, duration, and style of travel (e.g. first class, adventure, hiking, relief work). Based on the traveler's individual risk assessment, a health care professional can determine the need for immunizations and/or preventive medication (i.e. prophylaxis for malaria) and provide advice on precautions to avoid disease.

Travelers should plan ahead and consult a travel medicine practitioner or physician **4 to 8 weeks before departure** in order to allow sufficient time for optimal vaccination schedules to be completed. This service is available at both Wayne and Holmes County Health Departments. Vaccination is the administration of a vaccine to stimulate a protective immune response with the goal of preventing disease. While vaccination is a highly effective method of preventing certain infectious diseases, the protective effects of most vaccines require several weeks and may require multiple doses of the vaccine. Despite their success in preventing disease, vaccines do not fully protect 100 percent of the time. The vaccinated traveler should not assume that there is no risk of contracting the disease(s) against which he/she has been vaccinated.

Vaccines for travelers include: (1) those that are considered routine or childhood vaccines in the United States; (2) those that are mandatory for entry into the host country; (3) and

those that are advised due to the prevalence of disease in the host country. Pre-travel precautions should include booster doses of routine vaccines if the regular schedule has not been followed or a full course of primary immunization for people who have never been vaccinated. For additional information, please feel free to visit the CDC website: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/>.

International travel should be an exciting and rewarding adventure. The Wayne and Holmes County Health Departments want to do our part to ensure that your trip is not spoiled by illness. We ask that you do your part and see your medical provider 4 to 8 weeks before you travel.

If you have questions or want to make an appointment, call Holmes County Health Department at 330-674-5035 or Wayne County Health Department at 330-264-9590. Please have your vaccination records on hand when you call or come in for an appointment.