



# ***Press Release***

**Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department**

<http://health.hamiltontn.org>

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## **Health Department Encourages Vaccination for Individuals Traveling to Earthquake Affected Areas of Haiti**

Chattanooga, TN- As local groups and individuals make plans to travel to Haiti to participate in earthquake relief efforts, individuals should be aware of recommended steps to protect their health while traveling there. Immunizations for diseases common to the area should be given at least two weeks prior to departure for maximum protection. In addition to ensuring routine vaccinations, especially tetanus, are up to date, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Typhoid vaccinations are recommended for travel to Haiti. Medications to protect against malaria are also recommended as well as appropriate insect repellent and netting for sleep.

It's important to note that Haiti, and specifically the area near Port-au-Prince, has suffered a crippling blow to its infrastructure, and relief workers should prepare to be self-sufficient. Personal protective equipment such as goggles and work boots for physical laborers and surgical masks and rubber gloves for health workers is strongly recommended. Travelers are also encouraged to practice additional protective health measures which include: washing hands thoroughly with soap and clean water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and avoiding drinking local tap water.

"Because relief worker's aid is so desperately needed in Haiti, it's essential that workers remain healthy during their trip. The recommended vaccines and anti-malarial therapy can provide protection from these sometimes chronic and even deadly diseases." says Renee Grayson, Overseas Travel Clinic Manager at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department.

Persons planning a trip to Haiti should contact their medical provider as soon as possible to discuss any needed vaccines or medications. The Health Department also has available the recommended vaccines and will work with those traveling to Haiti to ensure they get their vaccines in a timely manner. To make an appointment or inquire about the cost of the vaccines, persons should call the Overseas Travel Clinic at 209-8340, Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Guidelines for and additional information about responding to a disaster can be found at the CDC Emergency Preparedness and Response website: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>.