

# PUERTO RICO IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Although the US government does not require any immunizations for travel in Puerto Rico, we have listed several immunizations that you may wish to consider. These recommendations are based on the idea that we will be going "off the beaten path" and will be in rural areas. **Generally, the worst illness is traveler's diarrhea, but the CDC does recommend several immunizations. As with any medical recommendation, we strongly suggest you consult your personal physician to make the final decision about immunizations.**

## RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

### **Hepatitis A**

We recommend **active immunization** with Hepatitis A vaccine, such as Havrix, VAQTA or passive immunization with Immune Globulin (IG). The active immunization is preferred, and is usually good for 1 year or more. **The CDC states that travelers are considered 'protected' four weeks after receiving the initial vaccine dose.** *Immune Globulin* should be given if the vaccine is administered ***less than four weeks before travel***. This is important, for we will be traveling in rural areas, and we cannot control ***all*** aspects of food preparation. **PLEASE DO NOT DELAY.**

**For more information check out the CDC website:**

**[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/faq.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/faq.htm)**

### **General Vaccinations**

All routine vaccines (such as DTP or Td, Hib, MMR, polio, varicella, influenza and pneumococcal) should be kept up-to-date as a matter of good health practice.

## GENERAL HEALTH CONCERNS

### **Dengue Fever**

Dengue is a mosquito transmitted viral disease occurring in tropical and subtropical areas of the world, primarily in poor urban areas. The illness is flu-like and characterized by sudden onset, high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain and rash. In Puerto Rico, the risk of contracting dengue fever is limited--especially since **we stay away from areas with a history of Dengue**. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for Dengue Fever; the preventative measure is to reduce exposure to dengue carrying mosquitoes. Mosquito repellent helps, but keep in mind that although DEET is the most effective ingredient in insect repellents, a concentration of greater than 35% is discouraged and is found to be ineffective.

### **Sunshine**

We take all reasonable safety precautions in traveling, including monitoring students' exposure to the intense sun in Puerto Rico. We are aware that a successful trip is dependent on monitoring and responding to the physical and emotional health of each participant. We take care to structure the program so the participants have time to stay cool & out of the sun, but students must also follow a few basic precautions, including the frequent application of sunscreen or sunblock. The staff will help to remind everyone, but please be sure to pack sunblock, and a lip balm with a high SPF.