



As countries prepare for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, PAHO issues recommendations to strengthen measles surveillance and vaccination

Washington, D.C., 2 June 2026 (PAHO) — As countries across the Americas prepare for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ and other mass gatherings, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is urging health authorities to strengthen measles surveillance, vaccination, and rapid response measures amid ongoing outbreaks in the Region.

In an [Epidemiological Alert](#) issued on 29 May, PAHO recommends that countries review their performance in measles and rubella surveillance and vaccination coverage to identify areas at highest risk and implement preventive actions. The Organization warns that increasing measles transmission and heightened international travel create favorable conditions for the spread of the disease during large international events.

“Specifically, and in the context of the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, as well as other mass gathering events, countries should increase the sensitivity of their surveillance systems through the implementation of active case-finding to document the absence of measles and rubella cases and to provide information and vaccination services to travelers,” PAHO stated in the alert.

To reduce the risk of international spread during this event, PAHO recommends that countries advise travelers aged six months and older who cannot provide proof of vaccination with two doses or immunity to receive a dose of measles-rubella vaccine, preferably two weeks before traveling to areas where measles or rubella transmission has been documented.

The Organization also recommends that countries provide travelers with information on the signs and symptoms of measles and rubella before

departure, including fever, rash, cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis, joint pain, and swollen lymph nodes.

During travel, PAHO recommends that countries advise travelers who develop symptoms consistent with measles or rubella to seek immediate medical care, wear a medical facemask, avoid close contact with others, refrain from visiting public places for seven days following the onset of rash, and follow measures to reduce the risk of transmission.

Upon return, countries should encourage travelers who suspect they may have contracted measles or rubella to contact a healthcare provider and inform health professionals about their recent travel history.

PAHO also called on countries to strengthen epidemiological surveillance in high-risk areas, including border regions, airports, ports, and locations hosting major international events. The alert recommends enhancing active case-finding, ensuring rapid investigation of suspected cases, maintaining trained rapid response teams, and strengthening coordination for international contact tracing and outbreak response when necessary.

Rising cases across the Americas and globally

The alert comes amid a sustained increase in measles cases both globally and across the Americas. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 184,489 measles cases were reported in 155 Member States between January 1 and May 13, 2026, of which 100,239 (54.3%) were confirmed. The WHO South-East Asia Region accounted for 29% of reported cases, followed by the Eastern Mediterranean Region with 21%, while the African and Americas regions each represented 19% of the global total.

In the Americas, 20,521 measles cases and 25 deaths were confirmed in 16 countries and one territory between epidemiological weeks 1 and 20 of 2026. This represents a fourfold increase compared with the 5,123 cases reported during the same period in 2025 and has already surpassed the total number of cases recorded throughout all of last year.

Mexico has confirmed 10,920 cases and 13 deaths so far in 2026, while Guatemala has reported 6,209 cases and 12 deaths. Canada has reported 1,018 cases, while the United States has recorded 1,952. Peru has reported 301 confirmed cases, while other countries in the region—

including Bolivia, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, and Uruguay—have also reported cases linked to outbreaks or importations.

According to PAHO, the majority of reported cases have occurred among unvaccinated individuals or people whose vaccination status was unknown. The Organization noted that increasing international travel and ongoing outbreaks underscore the importance of maintaining strong surveillance systems and ensuring travelers are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases before participating in large international events.

PAHO further reminded health authorities that a measles vaccination certificate is not a requirement for entry into countries under the International Health Regulations (IHR), while emphasizing that vaccination remains the most effective measure to prevent transmission and protect public health.

Links

[Epidemiological Alert: Measles in the Americas Region - 29 May 2026](#)

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system (OAS).

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