



Important Health Information for Parents Adopting Children from Haiti during the 2010 Earthquake Recovery

Congratulations on the adoption of your child!

Adding a new member of the family is a very exciting event - one that brings new joys, challenges, and duties. As you are getting your child settled into your family, one thing that is important to address right away is your child's health.

Even before the 2010 earthquake, the health of many Haitian orphans was very poor. Serious infectious diseases, especially tuberculosis (TB), are a concern in Haiti. High rates of malnutrition is also a serious concern. Orphans tend to be greatly affected by these health issues. Therefore, it is very important that children adopted from Haiti coming to the United States are screened for such illnesses so that they can be treated as soon as possible.

Initial Medical Exam for Children Adopted from Haiti

Before internationally adopted children come to the United States, they are usually required to have a medical exam. However, orphans from Haiti have been allowed to bypass this medical exam due to the lack of medical care available in Haiti since the January 2010 earthquake.

It is still very important that children adopted from Haiti after the 2010 earthquake have a medical exam to screen for infectious diseases and other health issues. This exam should take place as soon as possible after arrival in the United States by a doctor or medical provider. If you do not have a doctor or medical provider, please contact your local health department.

The initial exam should include:

- medical history
- general physical exam, including a measure of nutrition
- screening for tuberculosis (TB)*
- vaccinations, as appropriate for the age of the child
- screening for intestinal parasites
- a blood test (with complete blood cell count)
- HIV testing
- screening for malaria
- treatment for chronic diseases, such as asthma

* If sputum specimens have to be collected for any child, the medical provider should inform the local health department. This will ensure proper follow-up.



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More Complete Medical Exam for Children Adopted from Haiti

After children adopted from Haiti are settled in their new homes, a more complete medical evaluation is also recommended. This exam will ensure that all possible health issues are uncovered and treated. This more complete exam should include:

- hearing and vision tests
- growth and development evaluations
- culturally appropriate mental health assessment
- blood lead testing
- screening for congenital defects (such as fetal alcohol syndrome)

A doctor or other medical provider should use the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines on the Medical Evaluation of Internationally Adopted Children for Infectious Diseases for this exam ([Red Book®: 2009 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases - 28th Ed. \(2009\)](#)).

Please note that the initial medical exam and more complete medical exam can take place at the same time. However, the initial medical exam should not be delayed if a more complete medical exam cannot take place right away.

For more information:

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