

## **The Ohio State University Mumps Outbreak FAQs**

*March 2014*

**Columbus Public Health is currently working closely with the medical staff at Ohio State's Office of Student Life to investigate a mumps outbreak among students.**

### **What is mumps?**

Mumps is a viral illness that can cause fever, body aches, headaches, fatigue, swelling of the salivary glands or pain with chewing or swallowing. About a third of people who contract the mumps virus do not develop any symptoms.

### **How does the mumps virus spread?**

Mumps is most commonly spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and a non-infected person inhales respiratory droplets that contain the virus.

### **How soon after infection do symptoms occur?**

Symptoms usually occur 14 to 18 days after infection. The time between infection and illness can be as short as 12 days or as long as 25 days.

### **When can mumps be spread?**

People with mumps are usually contagious from two days before to five days after they develop symptoms. A person is most contagious just before symptoms appear.

### **How can a person with mumps avoid spreading it to others?**

- Stay at home for five days after symptoms (salivary gland swelling) begins (required by Ohio law OAC 3701-3-13, (P)); avoid school, work, social gatherings, and other public settings.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

### **Is there a vaccine to prevent?**

Yes, the mumps vaccine is given on or after a child's first birthday. In the United States, it is usually combined with measles and rubella vaccines, together known as MMR (measles, mumps and rubella). A second dose of mumps vaccine is recommended

before children enter school (when they are four to six years old.) People who receive two doses of mumps vaccine are much less likely to develop mumps than those who have one dose or none.

### **Can people who have been vaccinated still get mumps?**

Yes, for every 100 people vaccinated, 80 to 90 of them will be fully protected, but 10 to 20 are at risk for the disease. Though mumps vaccination cannot protect everyone, the vaccine greatly lowers the number of people who get sick when exposed to the virus. If a community maintains a high vaccination rate, the risk of exposure declines too. And while vaccination cannot protect everyone from developing mumps, people who get mumps following vaccination are at lower risk of problems.

### **What should I do if I attend The Ohio State University and think I was exposed to mumps?**

If you are exposed to mumps and have been vaccinated, you are less likely to develop the disease. If you did not get the vaccine or only got one dose, there is no treatment to prevent infection. However, we would recommend that you get a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose or begin the vaccine series as this may lessen the severity of illness or decrease the spread to others on campus. The vaccine is available through Student Life Student Health Services. Call 292-4321 to schedule an appointment.

If you develop symptoms of mumps, please **stay home** from work, school, sports and all public gatherings for five days after symptoms start. You should seek medical care to be properly diagnosed. You can schedule an appointment with Student Life's Student Health Services by phone at 292-4321 or [via their website](#), or after hours you can go to Ohio State's urgent care center at the [Martha Morehouse Medical Plaza](#), 2050 Kenny Road, Suite 2400.

Faculty and staff with mumps symptoms should contact their private health care providers.

### **Have mumps outbreaks occurred in vaccinated people before?**

Yes, in 2006 there was an outbreak of mumps in the Midwestern United States. The outbreak was mainly among college students who had already been vaccinated. There was an outbreak of mumps in 2009-2010, mostly among school-aged children who had been vaccinated in New York City. Also, as recent as February of this year, Fordham University in New York experienced an outbreak amongst its student community.

### **What problems can mumps cause?**

- The vast majority of mumps cases do not lead to serious complications.
- The mumps virus can cause inflammation of the central nervous system, but the resulting illness (viral meningitis) is usually not serious. Headache and stiff neck may occur in up to 15% of people with mumps.
- Males who are past puberty may experience orchitis, or testicular inflammation. It causes pain, swelling, nausea, vomiting and fever. The affected area may remain

tender for weeks. Approximately half of patients with orchitis experience some atrophy of the testicles, but they rarely lose the ability to produce sperm.

- Some women may experience inflammation of the ovaries or breasts from mumps.
- Deafness, in one or both ears, occurs in approximately one person out of 20,000 who develops mumps.

### **Where can I get more information about mumps and mumps vaccine?**

- For **patients** (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/outbreaks/outbreak-patient-qa.html>
- For **providers** (CDC):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/outbreaks/outbreak-providers-qa.html>
- Mumps outbreaks (CDC):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mumps/outbreak/case-control.htm#outbreak>
- Prevention and control in healthcare settings (CDC):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/prev-control-settings/index.html>
- Measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (Immunization Action Coalition):  
[http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis\\_mmr.asp](http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis_mmr.asp)

*Information provided courtesy of Ohio State Student Life Student Health Services, Columbus Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Fordham University.*