



# NEWS



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## **Health Department Seeing Mumps in McLean County** *Reports of potential mumps case growing, but no outbreak yet*

BLOOMINGTON – As of September 2, the McLean County Health Department has three confirmed cases of mumps and is in the process of investigating a growing number of potential mumps cases in the county. Residents at highest risk of mumps are encouraged to get the measles- mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR) as soon as possible. High risk groups are those who have not received any doses of MMR vaccine and those who have received only one dose of MMR. Any person who is unsure whether they have received two doses of MMR vaccine should talk with their healthcare provider to determine their vaccination status or to get a blood test to see if they show immunity to mumps.

“Protection against mumps is critical to contain the potential spread of mumps in our county,” explains Walt Howe, director of the McLean County Health Department. “It is likely that we will see more people testing positive for mumps in the coming days and we need to build as much herd immunity in our county as we can so that the virus eventually has nowhere to go,” says Howe; adding, “we are currently working on a plan to distribute vaccine in the community, if necessary, in the most efficient and effective way possible.”

In addition to being up-to-date on the MMR vaccine, residents are reminded that good health practices are an additional way to help prevent the spread of mumps. The following five good health practices are especially important:

1. Avoid sharing drinks, eating utensils, and cigarettes with others.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and put the used tissue in a trash can. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash your hands after handling used tissues.
3. Wash your hands well and frequently with soap and water. If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
4. Clean frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, counters) regularly with soap and water or with cleaning wipes.
5. Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.

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Mumps is a viral infection that causes swelling in the salivary glands near the jaw. It is a contagious disease spread through mucous droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person. The virus is most commonly spread by:

1. coughing, sneezing, and kissing
2. touching surfaces with droplets on them and then touching your own mouth or nose

The symptoms of mumps include fever, headache, swollen salivary glands, and malaise. Some cases also cause swelling of ovaries or testicles and rare complications include deafness, meningitis, spontaneous abortion and sterility in men. These symptoms generally appear 12 to 25 days after becoming infected. Individuals are most infectious during the two days prior to developing symptoms until five days after the symptoms appear. Anyone experiencing mumps symptoms should contact their healthcare provider immediately to be tested for infection with the mumps virus.

Says Howe, "We are working with the Illinois Department of Public Health and are following their, *Mumps Disease Management and Investigation Guidelines*, as we work to get the spread of mumps stopped as quickly as possible. At this point we ask that everyone protect themselves by practicing good health practices and those who are not current on their MMR vaccinations obtain the vaccine from their healthcare provider, or the health department."

To schedule an MMR vaccination at the McLean County Health Department, call 309-888-5435. Additional information about mumps can be found at, <http://1.usa.gov/1LOrnnQ>

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