



NEWS



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Two McLean County High Schools Moved to Mumps Outbreak Status

BLOOMINGTON – As the community-wide mumps outbreak continues to grow in McLean County, the McLean County Health Department has added two area high schools to the list of sites with increased mumps activity. Both Normal West High School and University High School now have three or more confirmed cases of mumps linked to their campuses. At both schools, letters are being sent to all students, faculty, and staff who have been identified as close contacts to the individuals with mumps.

As of September 18th, test results have confirmed 21 positive mumps cases in McLean County, with additional tests pending. Individuals with confirmed mumps virus tests remain in the 15 to 54 age range, with the biggest concentration those between the ages of 15 and 20.

Says Melissa Graven, Communicable Disease Program Supervisor at the McLean County Health Department, “It is evident with the growing number of cases and the investigations we are conducting, that mumps is widespread and affecting all the schools in some capacity in our community.” Adding, “At this point, beyond stressing the importance of making sure residents are fully vaccinated with two (2) doses of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, we are turning our focus to identifying those most susceptible to mumps in our schools and universities. We want to limit the impact on those who cannot receive the vaccinations due to medical reasons by working with the schools on how best to protect the most vulnerable.”

Preventative steps everyone should be taking to avoid getting the mumps include the following good health practices:

1. Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
2. Avoid sharing drinks, eating utensils, and cigarettes with others.
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, desks, counters) regularly with soap and water or with cleaning wipes.

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“Most of the positive cases we are seeing involve individuals who have been fully vaccinated for mumps,” explains Walt Howe, Director of the McLean County Health Department. “When you see mumps outbreaks in highly vaccinated populations, it can be a bit confusing; but, it should not be interpreted as meaning the vaccine doesn’t work. Vaccine effectiveness is determined by comparing the disease rate in people who are vaccinated with the disease rate in those who have not been vaccinated. In highly vaccinated populations, like McLean County, people who have not been vaccinated against mumps usually have a much greater mumps attack rate than those who have been fully vaccinated. “In general, a person who has had both doses of MMR vaccine is about 9 times less likely to get mumps than someone who has had no MMR vaccinations,” Howe adds.

The McLean County Health Department will continue to monitor this situation and work together with school and healthcare providers in the community, as well as the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Residents experiencing symptoms of mumps are strongly encouraged to isolate from other people and contact their healthcare provider to be tested for mumps if they develop swollen salivary glands, ovaries, or testicles.

The Illinois Department of Public Health continues to test symptomatic individuals and the health department is available to provide MMR vaccinations to those that do not have the two (2) required doses of the vaccine. For adults unsure of their vaccination status, a blood sample can be taken to test for immunity to mumps (a mumps “titer” test). To schedule an MMR vaccination or a titer test at the McLean County Health Department, call 309-888-5435. The health department accepts both private and public health insurance. Additional information about mumps can be found at: <http://1.usa.gov/1LOrnnQ>

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