



NEWS



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A Fourth Mumps Case Confirmed at Heartland Community College

Campus now in an outbreak status

BLOOMINGTON – As confirmed cases of mumps continue to grow in McLean County, a small pocket of cases has developed with connections to Heartland Community College, prompting the Illinois Department of Public Health to declare an outbreak on the campus. Letters are being sent to all students, faculty, and staff who have been identified as close contacts to the individuals with mumps. A second set of letters is being sent to the parents and guardians of the infants and children attending the Childhood Development Lab (CDL) on Heartland's campus, alerting them to the situation and explaining preventative measures being taken by the CDL to protect their children, some of whom are too young to receive the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

As of September 16th, test results have confirmed 16 positive mumps cases in McLean County, with additional tests pending. The health department is continuing to trace contacts and investigate cases, in addition to working closely with local medical providers, the Regional Office of Education, and colleges, throughout the county. Individuals with confirmed mumps virus tests range in age from 15 to 54 years of age. An 8 month old, previously reported as positive for mumps, was later determined to be negative.

Explains Walt Howe, Director of the McLean County Health Department, "The McLean County Health Department continues to monitor this situation and is in communication with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Residents are strongly encouraged to be mindful of the fact that the mumps virus is circulating in the community. Active precautions and wariness of the means by which the virus is spread can assist in containing the virus."

Residents experiencing symptoms of mumps are strongly encouraged to isolate from other people until they can contact their healthcare provider to be tested for mumps. Additionally, those who are not up-to-date with their MMR vaccinations should make vaccination a priority.

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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 mucus droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person. The virus is most commonly spread by:

1. coughing, sneezing, talking, 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 the ovaries or testicles.

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. Rare complications include deafness, meningitis, spontaneous abortion and sterility in men

Residents are also again reminded that good health practices are an additional way to help prevent the spread of mumps. Specifically the following five good health practices are very 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.

Says Howe, "Our biggest message to the McLean County community remains: continue to be vigilant by practicing good health practices and certainly if you are not current on your MMR vaccinations, obtain the vaccine from your healthcare provider or the health department as soon as possible."

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. To schedule an MMR vaccination 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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