



NEWS



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Mumps cases rise at Illinois State University

There may be more cases in the community before we're clear of the virus

BLOOMINGTON – The McLean County Health Department has been able to link three or more confirmed cases of mumps by time or place to individuals on the campus of Illinois State University. Due to the campus outbreak, the university will be sending out letters to the campus community today and following up with more specific information and instructions for campus members that are the most susceptible to the mumps virus.

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 and is most frequently spread through coughing, sneezing, talking, kissing, and touching surfaces with droplets on them and then touching your own mouth or nose.

As reported earlier today, there are currently 21 confirmed mumps cases in McLean County, with additional tests pending. “The situation is very fluid”, explains Melissa Graven, Communicable Disease Program Supervisor at the McLean County Health Department adding, “the last thing we want to do is panic anyone in the community. We have been in a community outbreak since September 4th, and now as some of our closed communities -- like schools and colleges -- have three or more positive cases that are linkable when we do our contact tracing, they technically have their own mini-outbreaks.”

“There’s no doubt the mumps virus is circulating, but if you’ve taken steps to protect yourself and others, that’s the most you can really do,” says Graven. “We really want to be sure we are protecting those who cannot get the mumps vaccination due to medical conditions, so that’s where we are focusing a lot of our efforts now. The community can help by making sure they have done all they can do to prevent contracting the mumps virus.”

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Simple measures can be taken to help prevent getting mumps and spreading mumps:

- ✓ make sure you are up-to-date on two (2) doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine;
- ✓ avoid close contact with individuals who are sick;
- ✓ avoid sharing drinks, eating utensils, and cigarettes with others;
- ✓ wash your hands well and frequently with soap and water. If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; and,
- ✓ clean frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, desks, counters) regularly with soap and water or with cleaning wipes; and,
- ✓ stay home if you do feel like you have symptoms of mumps; and, contact your healthcare provider. Until you know for sure, you should isolate yourself as much as possible. If you get swollen salivary glands, ovaries or testicles, you should definitely be tested for mumps.

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.

The Illinois Department of Public Health continues to test symptomatic individuals and the McLean County 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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