



NEWS



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Normal Community Added To List of High Schools With An Increase In Mumps Cases

BLOOMINGTON – The McLean County Health Department has added Normal Community High School (NCHS) to the list of sites with increased mumps activity. NCHS now has three or more cases of mumps linked to the school. Letters are being sent to all students, teachers, and staff alerting them to the situation and explaining what they can do to protect themselves from contracting the virus.

As of October 15th, test results have confirmed 36 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.

“It is very important for people to continue to get tested for mumps if they have symptoms and for health providers to report suspected and confirmed cases of mumps, to help bring an end to the spread of the disease,” says Walt Howe, Director, McLean County Health Department. The health department, together with state and federal agencies use the reported mumps activity in the county to better understand the prevalence of the disease -- which plays a key role in determining if additional preventative measures need to be taken.

“We want every student and worker that is, or would be, excluded from school or work due to the presence of mumps cases, to feel confident that their school or workplace is clear of mumps activity when they are able to return,” explains Melissa Graven, Communicable Disease Program Supervisor. “By knowing who has a suspected or confirmed case of the mumps, we can make sure that in our investigation we contact the people they may have exposed to the virus. This can be critical information for individuals who are most vulnerable to contracting the disease,” Graven adds.

The time between exposure to the disease and the appearance of the first symptoms of illness for mumps is between 12 days and 25 days after exposure and infection with the virus. Individuals with mumps are most infectious during the two days prior to the onset of symptoms and until 5 days after the symptoms appear.

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Mumps typically starts with a fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite. Symptoms can progress to swelling of the salivary glands, causing puffy cheeks and a tender, swollen jaw.

Among post-pubertal males, mumps can lead to testicular inflammation that causes pain, swelling, nausea, vomiting and fever. Among some females who have reached puberty, mumps can cause an inflammation of the ovaries or breasts. Anyone who experiences any of these symptoms should contact their doctor right away and limit their exposure to others.

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

1. Make sure you are up-to-date on two (2) doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.
2. Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
3. Avoid sharing drinks, eating utensils, and cigarettes with others.
4. Wash your hands well and frequently with soap and water. If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
5. Clean frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, desks, counters) regularly with soap and water or with cleaning wipes.

The McLean County Health Department is working together with county schools and post-secondary schools, area healthcare providers, as well as the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help curb the spread of mumps in the community.

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. Anyone unsure of their vaccination status can also make an appointment at the health department, or with their healthcare provider, to have a mumps titer test done to test for immunity to mumps. 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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