

MUMPS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY-WIDE OUTBREAK IN FRANKLIN AND DELAWARE COUNTIES

Is there an outbreak of mumps?

Columbus Public Health (CPH) and Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) declared a community-wide outbreak of mumps on March 24, 2014. Delaware County became included in the outbreak as of April 4.

What is mumps?

Mumps is a viral illness that affects the salivary glands.

How does the mumps virus spread?

Mumps is spread by droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes or talks. Items used by an infected person, such as cups or soft drink cans, can also be contaminated with the virus, which may spread to others if those items are shared. In addition, the virus may spread when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and someone else then touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms include fever, body aches, headaches and swelling of the salivary glands. The parotid gland, located just below and in front of the ear, is usually affected and may also swell. About a third of people who contract the mumps virus do not develop symptoms.

What problems can mumps cause?

- The mumps virus can infect the central nervous system, but the resulting illness (viral meningitis) is usually not serious. Headache and stiff neck occur in up to 15% of people.
- Males who are past puberty may experience orchitis (testicular inflammation).
- Some women experience inflammation of the ovaries or breasts from mumps.
- Deafness, in one or both ears, occurs in about one person out of 20,000 with mumps.

How soon after infection do symptoms occur?

Symptoms usually occur 14 to 18 days after exposure. However, the time between exposure and illness can be as short as 12 days or as long as 25 days.

When are people who have mumps contagious?

People with mumps are usually contagious from two days before to five days after they develop symptoms. A person is most contagious just before symptoms appear.

When are you considered exposed to mumps?

A person is considered exposed if they are within three feet of an infected person who coughs or sneezes, releasing droplets into the air (unless protected with gloves and a mask). Mumps is highly infectious and mainly spread by droplet or saliva through kissing or sharing a cup or glass.

How can a person with mumps avoid spreading it to others?

- Stay at home for five days after symptoms begin; avoid school or work settings and isolate from others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and do not share beverages.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Is there a vaccine for mumps?

Yes, the mumps vaccine is given on or after a child's first birthday. In the U.S, it is usually combined with measles and rubella vaccines (MMR). A second dose of mumps vaccine is given before children enter school (when they are four to six years old.)

Is there any recommendation to give a third dose of MMR?

No. If an individual did not respond to the first two doses, they will probably not respond to a third.

Is there any danger in giving a third dose?

It is safe to give a third dose of MMR vaccine if an individual cannot get their vaccine record.

How long does it take to develop MMR immunity?

In general, it takes 10-14 days to mount a response to a vaccine if it is the body's first exposure. Then, it takes approximately seven days after the second exposure.

Should children under 12 months be given MMR?

No. Children under 12 months will have immunity from their mothers, if they are immune.

Why are so many cases occurring in vaccinated people?

Studies suggest that the mumps vaccine is 80% to 90% effective. That means that for every 100 people vaccinated, 80 to 90 of them will be fully protected, but 10 to 20 are at risk for the disease. Though mumps vaccination cannot protect everyone, it greatly lowers the number of people who get sick when exposed to the virus and lowers the risk of problems. This does not mean that the vaccine is not working; in fact, the mumps vaccine is working as expected.

What are public health officials doing about the outbreak?

- Closely monitoring new cases in our region.
- Working to assure new cases are/are not linked to the outbreak.
- Interviewing (investigating) all new cases immediately.
- Working with our partners at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to assure that cases around the country and state that could potentially be linked to this outbreak are identified so we may follow up.
- Working with other local universities to educate students about the importance of MMR and encouraging them to vaccinate.
- Providing guidance to local providers.
- Providing vaccine through our clinics.

Where can I get more information?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/index.html>.

Columbus Public Health - <http://columbus.gov/Mumps2014/>

Franklin County Public Health - <http://www.myfcph.org/>

Delaware General Health District - <http://www.delawarehealth.org/>