

Protect yourself against MUMPS



There has been a recent increase in mumps amongst students. Please read this important advice on how to protect yourself.

Why are you at increased risk?

Over the past four years there has been a large outbreak of mumps in young adults across the UK.

At this present time, mumps is mainly affecting older teenagers and young adults in their early twenties, and is mostly found in those further or higher education establishments. Some in this age group may only have received one dose of MMR.

The number of cases has increased more steeply in recent years because many of the young adults in this cohort (born between 1980 and 1992) are now at university or in further education colleges where the disease tends to spread rapidly from person-to-person because of greater social mixing in further educational establishments.

Students of any age who have no history of MMR vaccination should now seek the protection it affords.

Any young person who has not had two doses of MMR vaccine is at risk of contracting, measles, mumps or rubella.

What is mumps?

Mumps is a highly infectious serious illness caused by a virus. It usually starts with fever and headache for a day or two. In most cases this is followed by swelling and soreness of the glands between the ear and the jaw.

Mumps virus can also cause other problems. Men can get swollen, painful testicles and women can get swollen, painful ovaries. Ear infections, swelling of the pancreas and meningitis can also result. Mumps is usually more severe in adults than in young children.

The time from becoming infected to becoming unwell is around 14-21 days. People with mumps are most infectious just before they become unwell and for 5-10 days afterwards.

How can you protect yourself?

Students coming to University/ FE colleges should make sure they have had 2 doses of MMR vaccine. If you have not had 2 doses of MMR, please see your GP as soon as possible. Please tell the doctor or nurse if you think you may be pregnant or if you are planning a pregnancy as MMR vaccine is not recommended in pregnancy. You should not be charged for this vaccine.

What should you do if you think you might have mumps?

Do not go into university or further education college. Phone your GP or student occupational health service for advice.

Where can I get more information about mumps?

Further information on mumps is available on the following websites:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947400832

http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/mumps/gen_info.htm

http://www.immunisation.nhs.uk/Vaccines/MMR/The_diseases/Mumps

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Mumps/Pages/Introduction.aspx>