



# Arkansas Department of Health

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**Governor Asa Hutchinson**

**Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Health Officer**

November 29, 2016

Dear U of A student,

As of this afternoon, **there are 2 cases of mumps at the U of A and several others being investigated.** We are sending you this letter so you will know what to do to keep it from spreading.

## **What is mumps?**

Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads easily through coughing and sneezing. There is no treatment for mumps, and it can cause long-term health problems.

**The best way to protect against mumps is to get the MMR vaccine.** The MMR vaccine also protects against measles and rubella. It is also called the MMR shot. Unvaccinated people are 9 times more likely to get mumps than people with 2 doses of MMR vaccine.

**The Arkansas Department of Health is asking that all children and adults get up-to-date with their MMR vaccine.**

## **These are the recommended doses of the MMR vaccine:**

- **Your children younger than 6 years of age** need one dose of MMR vaccine at age 12 through 15 months and a second dose of MMR vaccine at age 4 through 6 years. If your child attends a preschool where there is a mumps case or if you live in a household with many people, your child should receive their second dose of MMR vaccine right away, even if they are not yet 4 years old. The second dose should be given a minimum of 28 days after the first dose.
- **Your children age 7 through 18 years** need two doses of MMR vaccine, if they have not received it already. The second dose should be given a minimum of 28 days after the first dose.
- **If you are an adult born in 1957 or later** and you have not had the MMR vaccine already, you need at least one dose. If you live in a household with many people or if you travel internationally, you need a second dose of MMR vaccine. The second dose should be given a minimum of 28 days after the first dose.
- **Adults born before 1957 are considered to be immune** to mumps and do not need to get the MMR vaccine.

## **What are the symptoms of mumps?**

Mumps usually causes the following symptoms for about 7 to 10 days:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite (not wanting to eat)
- Swollen glands under the ears or jaw

Some people who get mumps do not have symptoms. Others may feel sick but will not have swollen glands.

### **Is it serious?**

In most children, mumps is pretty mild. But it can cause serious, lasting problems, including:

- Meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord)
- Deafness (temporary or permanent)
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Orchitis (swelling of the testicles) in males who have reached puberty
- Oophoritis (swelling of the ovaries) and/or mastitis (swelling of the breasts) in females who have reached puberty

In rare cases, mumps is deadly. Adults are more likely than children to become very sick with mumps.

### **How does mumps spread?**

Mumps spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may take up to 26 days for a person to get sick after they have been infected. Mumps can spread before swollen glands appear and for 5 days afterward. Therefore, you should remain home until 5 days after the swollen glands first appeared.

### **What should you do if you get these symptoms?**

Do not go to work or to public places. If you get these symptoms, call your doctor's office before going to the clinic. Tell them you may have mumps. The doctor may not want you to sit in the clinic waiting area. Instead your doctor may ask you to come into the clinic another way. These steps will keep from spreading mumps to the other people.

ADH is working closely with the University of Arkansas officials to stop the spread of mumps. We will be monitoring the situation closely. If the outbreak continues to spread, additional steps may be needed. We will help your student health officials keep you informed.

Sincerely,

**Dirk Haselow, MD, PhD**

Dirk Haselow, MD, PhD

State Epidemiologist and Outbreak Response Medical Director