



## **IMPORTANT: MUMPS INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF**

We have been notified of an increase in cases of suspected mumps within University Students. This letter is to give you some information about the disease and how it can be prevented.

### **What is mumps?**

Mumps is a contagious viral infection caused by a paramyxovirus. Swelling of the parotid glands is the most common symptom of mumps. The parotid glands are a pair of glands responsible for producing saliva. They're located in either side of the face, just below the ears.

More general symptoms often develop a few days before the parotid glands swell. These can include:

- headache
- joint pain
- feeling sick
- dry mouth
- mild abdominal pain
- feeling tired
- loss of appetite
- a high temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F), or above

In about 1 in 3 cases, mumps doesn't cause any noticeable symptoms

Complications are rare but include swelling of the ovaries (oophoritis), swelling of the testes (orchitis), aseptic meningitis and deafness.

### **How the disease spreads**

Mumps is spread in the same way as colds and flu – through infected droplets of saliva that can be inhaled or picked up from surfaces and transferred into the mouth or nose

A person is most contagious a few days before the symptoms develop and for a few days afterwards.

If you have mumps, you can help prevent it spreading by:

- regularly washing your hands with soap and water
- using and disposing of tissues when you sneeze
- avoiding school or work for at least 5 days after the onset of swelling

## **When to see your GP**

It's important to contact your GP if you suspect mumps so a diagnosis can be made. While mumps isn't usually serious, the condition has similar symptoms to more serious types of infection, such as glandular fever and tonsillitis.

Let your GP know in advance if you're coming to the surgery, so they can take any necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

## **Diagnosing mumps**

Mumps can be confirmed in the laboratory by testing a sample of oral fluid from your mouth. Your GP surgery may either administer this test to you or may offer you a test kit that enables you to do the test for yourself. Alternatively, a test kit will be sent to you in the post from Public Health England.

It is important to confirm the diagnosis, so we would encourage you to use the test kit and return it either to the surgery or to Public health England using the freepost envelope provided. The test is very easy to do, and the kit comes with instructions. Test results will be sent to your GP Surgery

## **Protecting against mumps**

You can protect yourself against mumps by making sure you have received two doses of the combined **MMR** vaccine (for mumps, measles and rubella).

If you are not sure whether or not you have had two doses of the MMR vaccine, please check with your parents first and then with your GP.

If you have not had two doses of MMR vaccine, please make an appointment with your GP to get vaccinated. We still recommend two doses of MMR even if you have previously had single measles vaccine or measles and rubella vaccine.

MMR vaccine is freely available on the NHS and is the best protection against mumps. Some people may still get mumps after they have received two doses of MMR but they get a much milder illness and are less likely to suffer from any complications.

**Further information on mumps is available from:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mumps/>