

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tara Biesecker
Public Information Officer

PHONE: (208) 799-3100

CONTACT: Tara Roberts
University Communications

PHONE: (208) 310-2948

DATE: October 9, 2014

HEADLINE: Mumps Cases Confirmed in University of Idaho Students

LEWISTON, IDAHO – Public Health – Idaho North Central District has received lab confirmation of mumps in two students attending the University of Idaho in Moscow. Both students have received medical care, have resolved symptoms and can be considered no longer contagious. The University of Idaho has worked to notify close contacts of any student living on campus in common housing. Public Health has notified physicians in the region of this occurrence and continues to investigate any other potential cases. There are no other known cases at this time.

Mumps is an acute viral illness that mainly affects the salivary glands. The disease is caused by the mumps virus. The usual symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite; followed by swelling of salivary glands. The parotid salivary glands (which are located within the cheeks, near the jaw line, below the ears) are most commonly affected.

The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine is the best way to prevent mumps. Students may obtain vaccinations through Student Health, Public Health – Idaho North Central District, or private providers. The MMR vaccine should be routinely given when children are 12-15 months old, and a second dose should be given when they are 4-6 years old. Two doses of the vaccine are more effective against mumps than one dose and prevent most, but not all, cases of mumps and mumps complications.

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.

Most mumps transmission likely occurs before the salivary glands begin to swell and within the 5 days after the swelling begins. Therefore, CDC recommends isolating mumps patients for 5 days after their glands begin to swell.

Mumps affects all age groups. Recent mumps outbreaks occurred among those who have been vaccinated with mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccines.

Most people with mumps recover fully. However, mumps can occasionally cause complications, and some of them can be serious. Complications may occur even if a person does not have swollen salivary glands (parotitis) and are more common in people who have reached puberty.

Even though severe complications are rare, mumps can cause inflammation of the brain and/or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (encephalitis/meningitis), inflammation of the testicles (orchitis), ovaries and/or breasts (oophoritis and mastitis), spontaneous abortion, and deafness, usually permanent.

Mumps testing should be done by a healthcare provider. These tests include mumps serology, and swabs for viral isolation or viral RNA, to confirm the diagnosis. Currently, there is no specific treatment for mumps.

Good hand hygiene is important to control the spread of the disease. Everyone should cover both mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing and wash hands thoroughly and dispose of used tissues. Sharing of common items such as eating utensils and drinking cups should be avoided.