



COUNTY HEALTH MATTERS

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As most people have probably heard, there have been cases of the Mumps reported throughout the Midwest. The cases began December 2005 in Iowa and have since spread to eight neighboring states. The majority of cases are occurring among persons 18-25 years of age, many of whom have been vaccinated.

Mumps is an acute viral illness caused by the mumps virus. The most common symptoms are fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite followed by swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears. One or both sides of the glands can be affected.

The mumps virus is spread by mucus or droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when that person coughs or sneezes. Surfaces of items handled by a sick person who does not wash their hands can also transmit the virus. If a person touches the same surfaces and then rubs their eyes, mouth, nose, etc., they may also get sick.

Approximately one-third of infected people don't know they have mumps because they show no symptoms. Severe complications from the mumps are rare.

Symptoms typically appear 16-18 days after infection, but this period can range from 12-25 days after infection. The period of time an infected person can transmit mumps to a non-infected person is from 3 days before symptoms appear to about 9 days after the symptoms appear.

There is no specific treatment for mumps; supportive care should be given as needed. Mumps vaccine is the best way to prevent mumps. If you believe that you may not be immune to the disease you should contact your physician. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is not recommending mass vaccination clinics at this time.

People who may have been in contact with a mumps case should be aware of the signs and symptoms of mumps disease and should seek medical attention if any of the symptoms begin. If you think you may have the mumps and you seek medical attention, call your physician in advance so that you don't have to sit in the waiting room and possibly infect other patients.

For more information about the Mumps disease please visit the Centers for Disease Control's website at www.cdc.gov, or contact the Warren County Health Department at 636-456-7474.