

Iowa is experiencing a mumps epidemic. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, as of 4/17/06, 815 cases of probable or confirmed cases of mumps have been reported. About 19% of these cases are college students and most have reported one or two MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccines.

The CDC has confirmed that the Iowa mumps virus strain is a type that is not uncommon in the world, and is similar to the strain present in the 2004-05 mumps outbreak in the United Kingdom. The strain is covered by the MMR vaccine given in the U.S. It is unclear why individuals with documented vaccines are becoming ill with the mumps. The mumps vaccine is 95% effective, so it could be that the mumps cases are in those individuals where the vaccine did not produce the expected immunity.

Mumps is a contagious viral illness, spread by “droplet” contact with infectious respiratory secretions. It can be more serious in adults. The symptoms of mumps are swelling and discomfort in the jaw area, on one or both sides. Fever, headache and body aches are sometimes present. Mumps often starts with cold symptoms. Mumps is most contagious 1-2 days before the onset of symptoms, and for 5 days after onset of parotid swelling. The incubation period (time after exposure when symptoms could develop if the person is susceptible) is usually 16-18 days, but cases can occur from 12-25 days after exposure.

If you notice symptoms listed above, swelling in your jaw / cheek / neck area, OR if you experience ANY symptoms after a known exposure to someone who has the mumps: ISOLATE YOURSELF! Do not go to classes, work, or social activities. Limit your exposure to others until you speak with a health care provider.

Make an appointment to see your healthcare provider. It is VERY important that you are evaluated and complete appropriate lab testing. Tell the appointment scheduler you have mumps symptoms. They should tell you to put on a mask when you arrive in their clinic.

If you are symptomatic, regardless of testing done, you are advised to stay home from work and class and to limit close contact with others for 5 days after the symptoms start. This is the time when the illness is most contagious. Wear a mask around others at all times.

THIS IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURE THAT WILL HELP LIMIT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS TO OTHERS.

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Antibiotics are generally not prescribed since it's a viral illness. You may be advised to take ibuprofen, drink plenty of fluids, and rest as much as possible.

To avoid spreading disease, remember to wash your hands often or use hand

sanitizer. Avoid sharing drinking glasses or eating utensils. Cover your coughs and sneezes. Stay home when you are ill!

A good resource on mumps and other infectious diseases is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website: [CDC on Mumps](#).