



Tri-County Health Department

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Contact: Gary Sky, Public Information Officer (303) 846-6245

Tri-County Health Department Warns Parents About a Regional Mumps Outbreak

Because of a large outbreak of mumps occurring across the Midwestern United States, Tri-County Health Department is urging parents to review their children's immunizations records to be sure that they are up-to-date on mumps immunizations. The MMR vaccine (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) should be administered at ages 12 to 15 months, with a second immunization at 4 to 6 years, for a total of two doses for children under 18 years of age.

Adults should also get the MMR vaccine. Generally, anyone who was born after 1956 should have had at least one dose, unless they can show that they have had either the MMR vaccine or the disease. Most people of this age group have had the vaccine, because it was a requirement for enrollment in the public school system.

The state of Iowa has reported more than 600 cases of mumps, with the majority of cases occurring among persons 18-25 years of age, many of whom had been vaccinated. There are very few patients among school-age and younger children. The Iowa state epidemiologist speculated that is because young adults typically had only one mumps shot as children, and a two-shot sequence has since become the norm.

Additional cases of mumps--possibly linked to the Iowa outbreak--are also under investigation in eight states, including Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Thus far, Colorado has not had any confirmed cases related to this outbreak.

"People sometimes say 'why bother' when it comes to immunizations, feeling that many diseases are rare or in the past. Occasionally there are still outbreaks, and this is a prime example of why we urge people to stay current with all vaccinations," states Richard L. Vogt, MD, Executive Director of Tri-County Health Department.

“Parents should review their child’s records and then contact their doctor or make an appointment at one of our many clinics in the metro area,” Vogt added.

Information on mumps and immunizations is available on the Tri-County Health Department website, www.tchd.org; by calling Tri-County’s immunization Hotline at 303-451-0123; or calling their International Travel Clinic at 303-784-7866.

Mumps is a viral infection acquired through direct contact with saliva, respiratory droplets spread by sneezing or coughing, or by contact with freshly contaminated surfaces. The incubation period is generally 16-18 days (range 12-25 days) from exposure to onset of symptoms. Immunization is a very important prevention measure, because antibiotics are not effective against mumps or other viral illnesses.

Symptoms include headache and fever, a general feeling of tiredness or sickness, followed by painful swelling of the salivary glands. This swelling on one or both sides of the face or neck is the typical indication of mumps.

Complications from mumps are rare but can be serious, and can include deafness; meningitis/encephalitis (swelling of the brain or brain lining); inflammation of the testicles, ovaries or breast; and spontaneous abortion. With the exception of deafness, these complications are more common among adults than children.

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