

Important Update from the Hunterdon County Health Department

MUMPS IN HUNTERDON COUNTY

The Hunterdon County Department of Health reported today that a student at Readington Middle School was diagnosed with mumps. The child has fully recovered and is back in school. The Readington school district is notifying all parents of students in the community, helping to ensure that information that might be shared is accurate and to provide a brief explanation about the mumps, a viral illness.

Mumps is an illness characterized by fast onset of tender, swelling of the parotid or other salivary gland, lasting 2 or more days, without other apparent cause. Complication from mumps can include inflammation of the brain and/or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord, inflammation of the ovaries and/or breasts in females, inflammation of the testicles in males, or temporary or permanent deafness. Mumps is spread through large respiratory droplets. The infectious period is two days before onset of symptoms to five days after symptoms appear. Suspected cases must remain at home for five days following onset of parotitis. The incubation period from exposure to onset of illness ranges from 12 to 25 days

New Jersey and New York health departments, in collaboration with the CDC, are investigating a mumps outbreak that began in New York last June and now affects more than 1,500 people. Nineteen hospitalizations have been reported; no deaths have occurred.

While mumps rarely occur among a highly vaccinated population such as the Hunterdon County community, occasional exceptions can arise in which the virus affects persons who years ago received the MMR (mumps, measles, rubella) vaccine required by state law for all public school children. Overall, mumps vaccinations have greatly reduced the incidence of mumps in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), between 1967 and the early 2000s, reported mumps cases decreased from 186,000 to less than 500 annually, making the current outbreak affecting more than 1,500 persons an anomaly being closely watched.

For updates about the mumps outbreak in New Jersey see http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/mumps_outbreak.shtml.

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