



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabama Department of Public Health investigates mumps at the University of Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) was recently notified by the University of Alabama (UA) Student Health Center that several students had been diagnosed with mumps. ADPH is investigating these notifiable disease cases and working closely with UA to contact potentially exposed people.

While UA has a highly vaccinated population of students, mumps can still occur in vaccinated communities, particularly in close-contact settings such as schools, colleges and camps. However, high vaccination coverage helps to limit the size, duration and spread of mumps.

During this investigation, ADPH recommends that UA students, faculty and staff not vaccinated with two doses of measles, mumps, rubella vaccine (MMR), immediately receive a second MMR at Student Health Center, their doctor, or health department. ADPH strongly recommends students who do not have any record of MMR and decline to be vaccinated should not attend class for 25 days after exposure to mumps.

Mumps is a virus that spreads through saliva and mucus from the mouth, nose or throat. An infected person can spread the virus by coughing, sneezing, talking, sharing items, and touching objects or surfaces with unwashed hands. Certain behaviors that result in exchanging saliva, such as kissing or sharing utensils, drinking after persons, and sharing lipstick or cigarettes, might increase spread of the virus.

Mumps is best known for the appearance of puffy cheeks and swollen jaws, but these symptoms only occur in up to two-thirds of infected persons. Some other symptoms of mumps include fever, headache, muscle pain, tiredness and loss of appetite. Mumps can occasionally cause complications, especially in adults.

Dr. Karen Landers, Assistant State Health Officer, ADPH, states, "The risk of mumps can be significantly reduced with two MMR vaccines. People should also wash hands, cover coughs, clean surfaces, and stay home when ill." MMR vaccine is a childhood vaccine recommended at 12-15 months and 4-6 years of age.

Mumps can occur any time of year and more commonly occurs where people have had prolonged, close contact with a person who has mumps, such as attending the same class, playing on the same sports team, or living in the same dormitory. Nevertheless, statistically, the number of mumps cases reported nationwide is low. Indeed, from January 1-28, 2017, 27

states reported just 495 mumps cases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2016, Alabama reported only one case of mumps.

Out of an abundance of caution, ADPH and UA have begun notifying the campus community about mumps, prevention tips, and vaccinations. For more information, visit adph.org/imm, cdc.gov/mumps or <https://www.ua.edu/campuslife/health/mumps>.

Contact your healthcare provider if you or someone you know is exhibiting mumps symptoms.

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