Mumps
What college students need to know

Q. What is mumps?
A. Mumps is a viral illness that can cause fever, body aches, headaches, fatigue, swelling of the salivary glands or pain with chewing or swallowing. About a third of people who contract the mumps virus do not develop any symptoms.

Q. How does the mumps virus spread?
A. Mumps is most commonly spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and a non-infected person inhales respiratory droplets that contain the virus.

Q. When can mumps be spread?
A. People with mumps are usually contagious from two days before to five days after they develop symptoms. A person is most contagious just before symptoms appear.

Q. How soon after infection do symptoms occur?
A. Symptoms usually occur 16 to 18 days after infection. The time between infection and illness can be as short as 12 days or as long as 25 days.

Q. Can mumps be treated?
A. There are currently no medications to treat the mumps virus. Instead, treatment is focused on relieving symptoms until your body’s immune system fights off the infection. People who show symptoms usually recover after a week or two.

Q. What are the symptoms of mumps?
A. Up to half of people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and therefore do not know they were infected with mumps.

The most common symptoms include:
- Swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite

Q. How can a person with mumps avoid spreading it to others?
- Stay at home for five days after symptoms (salivary gland swelling) begin; avoid school, work, social gatherings, and other public settings.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Preventing Mumps

1. Ensure that you have been immunized. All college students should have received two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine after their first birthday. If you haven’t, get vaccinated immediately.
   - Students can get vaccinated at no cost or by their health care provider.
   - Faculty/staff should visit their health care provider.

2. Washing your hands well and often with soap and water will help prevent mumps and other infections.

3. Minimize close contact with other people if you are sick.
If You Have Been Diagnosed with Mumps

Anyone diagnosed with mumps is expected to stay home from school, work, or similar activities for five days.

This means:
- Don’t attend class or labs, go to work, or socialize with others during this five-day period
- Don’t use public transportation

Prevent spreading the virus by:
- Staying home
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Washing your hands regularly with soap and water

Soothe your symptoms by:
- Getting plenty of bed rest
- Taking over-the-counter pain killers such as Ibuprofen or Tylenol, to relieve any pain
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Apply a warm or cool compress to your swollen glands to help reduce pain
- Eat foods that don’t require a lot of chewing

If you have questions about your symptoms call UHS at 608-265-5600.