

Vaccination Opportunity—Additional Protection for Mumps Summer 2006

What is mumps?

- Mumps is a viral disease that affects the parotid or salivary glands under the jaw and in the cheeks.
- Symptoms include fever, headache and swollen glands in front of and below the ear.
- Mumps is spread when fluid, such as coughs or sneezes, containing the virus gets in your nose, mouth or eyes. This can happen when a person with mumps coughs or sneezes near you. Sharing beverage containers, eating utensils, cigarettes and sneezing are other examples of how the virus can be spread between individuals.
- The infectious period is from three days before symptoms appear to about nine days after symptoms appear. Mumps is most contagious 48 hours before the illness begins.
- The incubation time, or the length of time from when a person is exposed to the virus to the onset of symptoms, can vary from 12 to 25 days, with the average between 16 to 18 days.
- Complications from mumps are more frequent among adults than children. Orchitis (swelling of the testicles) is a common symptom in males after puberty. Rarely, swelling of the spinal cord and brain (encephalitis) occurs. Mumps can also cause inflammation of the ovaries and/or breast, deafness, but rarely sterility.
- A single dose of vaccine, in the form of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) is not sufficient protection.
- Mumps immunization is most important for high school and post secondary students planning on attending post secondary institutions where large groups of people share enclosed spaces.

When was the last case of mumps?

- Yukon's last cases of mumps occurred in 1998. However, in late 2005, outbreaks of mumps occurred in Nova Scotia and Manitoba primarily post secondary students.
- Currently, there is a large mumps outbreak which started in Iowa, and is traveling to many states, including those bordering Canada. The majority of U.S. cases have occurred in 18-to 25-years-olds, but cases have occurred in persons of all ages.
- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization advises persons born before 1970 likely have "natural" protection.
- Yukon's coverage rate is significantly lower than the rate needed to offer protection.

What vaccine is used?

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR), a tri-valent vaccine has been used in Canada since the 1970s.
- In 1996, as part of a global measles elimination campaign, a two-dose MMR program was initiated across Canada.
- Yukon implemented a "catch-up" program offering MMR vaccine to infants and young children. Students already in school—Kindergarten to Grade 12, were offered single measles vaccine.
- Currently, Yukon infants and children are offered MMR vaccine shortly after their first birthday and again at 18 months of age.

How safe is MMR?

- MMR is very safe. It is a live-virus vaccine that is prepared in chicken embryo cell cultures.
- The only people who should not get the MMR immunization are those who had trouble breathing OR who had severe swelling on the skin or in the mouth after the first MMR.
- Pregnant women should NOT receive MMR and pregnancy should be avoided for three months following MMR.

- There may be some redness, swelling, or pain at the place where the needle went into the arm. Some people may experience a fever or rash about 7 to 10 days after the immunization. Some may have joint pain that lasts a short time.
- Persons who are immuno-compromised should check with their doctors before getting MMR.

Who should get this vaccine?

- Persons born since 1970 without documentation any MMR vaccinations and with NO memory of having had mumps.
- Persons born since 1970 with documentation of having had only one MMR vaccination.
- If you have more questions, talk to your local health nurse or your doctor.