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## Outbreak of Mumps in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has received 14 reports of mumps since Feb. 24, 2016. Eight of the cases were reported from Ward County. The age range of cases is 14 to 86 years. The NDDoH is urging North Dakotans to be sure they have received their MMR vaccine. Anyone with symptoms of mumps should be evaluated by a health care provider, and, if they have mumps, stay home for five days after symptoms started, and avoid contact with others.

Mumps is a viral illness best known for the puffy cheeks and swollen jaw that it causes as a result of swollen salivary glands. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis)

Mumps is generally a mild illness, but can cause complications, such as deafness, and inflammation of the testicles, brain, and ovaries. Symptoms may appear from 12 to 25 days after infection. People with symptoms are recommended to see a health care provider for testing, because other illnesses, including influenza, can cause parotitis.

“The best way to prevent mumps is to be vaccinated,” according to Molly Howell, Immunization Program Manager for the NDDoH. “The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. All children are recommended to receive MMR vaccine at 12 to 15 months of age and again at 4 to 6 years of age. MMR vaccine is required to attend child care, school, and colleges in North Dakota. People born before 1957 are generally considered immune to mumps due to the high rate of infection at that time.”

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Only two of the mumps cases had a history of two doses of MMR vaccine “It is not surprising to see mumps cases in vaccinated individuals,” said Howell. “The mumps component of the MMR vaccine is about 88 percent effective, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MMR vaccine is the only tool that we have available to prevent mumps; 88 percent is a lot better than not being vaccinated at all. People who have received two doses of the MMR vaccine are about nine times less likely to get mumps than unvaccinated people who have the same exposure to mumps virus.”

Mumps spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A good way to prevent transmission of mumps is to practice good hygiene habits; regularly wash hands with soap and water, sneeze and coughing into a tissue or your elbow, and avoid sharing drinks, food and utensils.

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