

Dear Parents / Legal Guardians,

This letter is to inform you that a person in your child's school may have contracted a case mumps. You are being told about this situation so that you can be aware of the symptoms of this disease, how it is transmitted and how to prevent infection. Mumps is not common in children that are up-to-date with their vaccinations.

Mumps is a contagious disease that is caused by the mumps virus. Mumps typically starts with a few days of fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite, and is followed by swelling of salivary glands. Other more serious symptoms can occur in rare cases, including meningitis, swelling of the testes or ovaries and inflammation of the joints.

Mumps is spread by droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes or talks. Items used by an infected person, such as cups or soft drink cans, can also be contaminated with the virus, which may spread to others if those items are shared. In addition, the virus may spread when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and someone else then touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose.

The best way to prevent your child from getting mumps is to make sure they are up-to-date with their vaccinations. School-aged children should have received at least one dose of a mumps vaccine (either mumps vaccine or measles-mumps-rubella, MMR) on or after their first birthday. A second dose of MMR is also recommended at 4-6 years of age. If you are not sure whether you child has received mumps vaccine, you should contact your child's primary care provider.

Since mumps is primarily spread by direct contact with respiratory droplets, persons may prevent contracting mumps with a few simple actions:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away after use.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If water is not near, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Do not share eating and/or drinking utensils.
- Refrain from close contact with individuals who are sick/experiencing symptoms.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. (Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.)

If your child or anyone in your household develops symptoms of mumps you should notify your primary care provider immediately. Persons with mumps should remain at home for 5 days after the swelling of the salivary glands began.

Finally, fevers in children should not be treated with products containing aspirin (salicylic acid), as use of these products with viral infections, like mumps, may **rarely** result in a serious condition called Reye Syndrome.

If you or your physician has any further questions, please contact the Scott Co. Health Department at 742-8203.

Sincerely,