



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 18, 2017

CONTACT: Woody McMillin
615-741-3446
Woody.McMillin@tn.gov
OR
Bill Christian
615-741-2308
Bill.Christian@tn.gov

RECENT MUMPS OUTBREAKS CAUSE CONCERN

Mumps Immunizations Needed to Protect Adults and Children

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Mumps, the illness many associate with childhood, can infect people of all ages and has been on the rise as some neglect to immunize themselves or their children. The Tennessee Department of Health is concerned about increases in mumps cases, including an ongoing outbreak in neighboring Arkansas which so far involves more than 2,400 suspected or confirmed cases of the illness.

“We are talking about this now because we are obviously worried about the significant rise in mumps cases in neighboring states and want everyone to be sure they are up to date on immunizations before it's too late,” said TDH Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH. “Mumps is a viral illness acquired through close contact with an infected person. It is usually a mild condition in children but can have more serious complications for adults. We should all be sure we and the people we care about are current on immunizations.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all adults born in 1957 or more recently who have not had mumps receive at least one dose of the measles-mumps-rubella, or MMR vaccine in their lifetimes. Two doses are recommended for adults in high-risk settings: those attending college, working in a healthcare facility or traveling internationally. People born before 1957 are presumed to be immune through natural illness in childhood. Some may not recall having mumps because one-third of mumps cases are extremely mild or without symptoms.

“We strongly encourage children more than one year of age and adults under 60 who do not know if they had mumps as a child and do not recall receiving mumps vaccine at some point in their lives to get the MMR vaccine,” said TDH State Epidemiologist Tim Jones, MD. “Hundreds of millions of MMR vaccine doses have been provided and its safety record is excellent.

“While few vaccines provide 100 percent protection against illness, two doses of the MMR vaccine are about 88 percent effective in preventing mumps,” Jones said. “That’s an impressive preventive measure to keep you and your family healthy, and to help prevent the disease from spreading to others who may not be able to be immunized.”

TDH recommends all parents and adults talk with their healthcare providers about the need for MMR vaccine for themselves and their children, and to discuss any existing conditions that might be of concern. Women who are pregnant or anticipating a pregnancy in the near future

and people with weakened immune systems should discuss immunization with their health care provider.

Frequent hand washing can help prevent mumps. Those who suspect they are infected should stay home until their healthcare provider informs them they are no longer able to spread the virus.

“Complications from mumps can include encephalitis, which is inflammation of the brain, and meningitis, which is inflammation of the tissue covering the brain and the spinal cord,” said Dreyzehner. “It can also affect ovaries, testicles and other parts of the body, causing permanent damage in some people. The best protection against mumps is proper vaccination with the measles-mumps-rubella, or MMR vaccine.”

Two doses of MMR vaccine are required for school and college students in Tennessee. MMR vaccine is available at all county health departments to any individual for whom protection from these diseases is desired. Certain insurance companies may be billed. Sliding scale fees based on income are available to people without insurance. Call your local health department for an appointment and for answers to questions you may have. To find a health department near you, visit <http://tn.gov/health/topic/localdepartments>.

For more information about mumps, visit www.cdc.gov/mumps/index.html.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. TDH has facilities in all 95 counties and provides direct services for more than one in five Tennesseans annually as well as indirect services for everyone in the state, including emergency response to health threats, licensure of health professionals, regulation of health care facilities and inspection of food service establishments. Learn more about TDH services and programs at www.tn.gov/health.

###

This news release can be accessed online at www.tn.gov/health/news.

Connect with TDH on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@TNDeptofHealth](#)!