

You may have heard about the outbreak of mumps in Hawaii. The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) identified more than 550 cases of mumps this year, a significant increase from the ten cases identified in 2016. The DOH confirmed that the disease has affected adults and children, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, and none of the diagnosed individuals reported needing hospitalization. To help prevent the spread of mumps in the community, it is important to know the facts and how to protect yourself.

What is mumps?

It is a contagious disease caused by a virus and affects the salivary glands. The infection is typically short-term and resolves within a few days to two weeks. Mumps is rare with less than 20,000 cases in the U.S. per year, but outbreaks still occur. Infection is easily preventable with vaccination.

How is it spread?

The virus is spread through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat, which can be dispersed by coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread through contact with contaminated surfaces.

What are the symptoms?

The time between exposure to the virus and the onset of symptoms is 16 to 25 days. Symptoms may range in severity. The most common symptoms include:

- Painful, swollen salivary glands
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches

Complications from mumps are not common, but may include inflammation of the brain, the tissue surrounding the brain, testicles, ovaries, and/or breast tissue; and deafness. If you have not been vaccinated or begin experiencing symptoms of mumps, you should contact your doctor immediately.

How do I prevent infection?

Mumps can be prevented with the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. The vaccine is safe and about 88% effective when two doses are given.

Is the vaccine medically necessary for me?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following.

- Children: Two doses at 12 to 15 months and 4 to 6 years of age.
- Students at post-high school education institutions: Those without evidence of immunity should get two doses of the MMR vaccine separated by at least 28 days.
- Adults: Those without evidence of immunity should get at least one dose of the MMR vaccine.

It is **not** recommended that you get the MMR vaccine if any of the following apply:

- You have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to the antibiotic neomycin or other component of the vaccine.
- You have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of MMR.
- You are pregnant. Pregnant women who need the vaccine should wait until after giving birth. Women should avoid getting pregnant for 4 weeks after receiving the MMR vaccine. However, it is safe for breastfeeding women to receive the MMR vaccine.
- If you are sick at the time the shot is scheduled, you may be advised to wait until you recover.

If you would like to know if the vaccine is appropriate for you, please talk with your doctor. If you have a history of serious health conditions or treatment with drugs that affect the immune system, you should discuss the necessity of the vaccine with your physician. Individuals born after 1957 may also be at higher risk of contracting the virus.

Where can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine can be given at your health provider's office or at a participating pharmacy.

If you have any questions or need assistance finding a provider in your area, visit hmaa.com/providers or contact our Customer Service Center at (808) 941-4622 or toll-free at (888) 941-4622.