



Date 15/01/2019

**Re: *Mumps in schools***

Dear Parent or Guardian,

A large number of mumps infections have been notified recently among students in second level schools. The national immunisation schedule recommends that all children have 2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine, one at 12 months of age and a second at 4-5 years. If your child has either had mumps or is up to date with their MMR vaccine, the chance of him/her developing mumps is low. If, however, your child has not had mumps and has not received the MMR vaccine, then it is quite possible that (s)he might get mumps. If you cannot confirm that your child is up to date / has had age appropriate MMR vaccination (measles, mumps, rubella, vaccine), he/she needs to be vaccinated. MMR is one of the safest vaccines.

***What is Mumps?***

Mumps is a viral infection. Symptoms include fever, headache, and swelling of cheek and jaw. Meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain) can occur but usually resolves without problems. More rarely encephalitis (inflammation of the brain itself) and deafness can occur. In adolescent and adult males mumps can cause inflammation of the testicles (orchitis), but, contrary to popular belief it is not a frequent cause of infertility. Persons are infectious for up to 7 days before the cheek swelling appears and **remain** infectious for **5 days** after symptoms develop.

***What should I do now?***

If your son/daughter has documentary evidence of having received MMR vaccine (age appropriate) or has had mumps there is no need for concern. If your child has not received the MMR vaccine and has not had mumps, then you should bring them to your GP for advice on vaccination. The vaccine will not protect them if they have been exposed this time, but it will protect them from future exposures.

***What should I do if I think my child has mumps?***

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Paracetamol or ibuprofen may be used to relieve pain and reduce fever. If your child is very ill or you are worried about complications, contact your medical practitioner

***Can my child stay in school?***

To prevent spread of mumps to others, your child must stay at home for **5 days** after the symptoms develop.

***How can I stop mumps spreading in the family?***

If you or any member of your family is not up to date with MMR vaccination, please go to your family doctor to discuss vaccination as appropriate.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at the above number.

Yours Sincerely,

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