

Health Unit Media Release

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Mumps outbreak in Iowa being followed by local Health Unit staff

The Public Health Agency of Canada is monitoring an outbreak of mumps in the state of Iowa in the United States. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, between December 2005 and April 10, 2006 a total of 515 confirmed, probable, and suspect cases of mumps have been reported in what has become the largest mumps outbreak in the United States since 1988. College-age students, those 18 – 22 years old, have been infected the most; cases in other age groups are also being reported.

Where national vaccination programs have been implemented, the number of mumps cases has dramatically declined worldwide in all age groups. The risk of infection is greatest among unvaccinated groups.

Mumps is an acute viral disease with symptoms that include fever, swelling, and tenderness of one or more salivary glands under the jaw and in the cheeks. It is spread by direct contact with or inhalation of the secretions from an infected person's nose or mouth.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends vaccination of all children at 12 months of age with a combined vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) followed by a booster dose at either 18 months of age or at 4 to 6 years of age.

The Public Health Agency of Canada routinely recommends that Canadian international **travellers consult their personal physician or a travel clinic four to six weeks prior to international travel**, regardless of destination, for an individual risk assessment to determine their individual health risks and their need for vaccination, preventative medication and personal protective measures.

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends, as well, that **travellers who become sick or feel unwell on their return to Canada should seek a medical assessment with their personal physician**. Travellers should inform their physician, without being asked, that they have been travelling or living outside of Canada, and where they have been.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, Communicable Disease Team, is monitoring the outbreak and will provide an update to the public if the situation changes. If you have further questions please call the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 or 345-5685.

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