21 January 2020

Dear Colleague

Mumps is circulating in your area – please help to stop the spread

We are writing to you to inform you of a sharp rise in notifications of mumps cases across the South West over the winter period. Since January 1st 2020, 333 cases have been reported with more than half of the cases aged between 15 and 24 years.

Mumps is an acute viral illness often (but not always) presenting with painful swellings at the side of the face under the ears, with associated headaches and joint pain. A high temperature may develop a few days before the swellings.

Someone with mumps is most contagious a few days before the symptoms develop and for a few days after the onset of swelling. Suspected cases should be advised to regularly wash their hands with soap, use and dispose of tissues when sneezing, and avoid school or work for at least 5 days after symptoms first develop.

Patient information on mumps can be found online here:

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Mumps/

Mumps is a statutory notifiable disease, which should be notified to the PHE South West Health Protection Team on a routine basis (i.e. in writing, within 3 working days). Notifications for mumps can be batched if convenient, and should be sent to the team securely from any NHS.net email account to phe.swhpt@nhs.net.

Further guidance on the notification of infectious diseases, including a template notification form and a poster with information for reporting clinicians, can be found online here:


For any enquiries, or for verbal notification of urgent notifiable disease, please call the Health Protection Team on 0300 303 8162 Option 1, Option 1.

Once notified of a probable mumps case, the Health Protection Team will send an oral fluid test kit to the home address of the patient. This test is for surveillance purposes only and the turnaround time means this is not appropriate for routine diagnostic use.

The MMR vaccine is effective at reducing the risk of mumps and of course measles so please maximise all opportunities to ensure children and young adults, with a particular focus on those aged 16-24 years old, are fully immunised with two doses of MMR. Please ensure you have adequate stock of MMR vaccines to offer opportunistic catch-up if individuals attend for other reasons.
PHE have prepared a press and media statement regarding the increase in cases of mumps which will be released this week. A separate communications toolkit has been developed and circulated for use by university and college teams.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Health Protection Team if you require any additional information or advice.

Yours faithfully,

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