

# Questions and Answers about the Mumps Outbreak at UC Berkeley – October 7, 2011

## **What is mumps?**

Mumps is a viral infection that is spread by droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose or throat of an infected person and can spread easily in settings where people have close contact with each other, such as college dormitories. Symptoms typically develop 2-3 weeks after exposure to the virus.

## **What are the symptoms of mumps?**

The most common symptoms are fever, headache, and swollen or tender salivary glands under the ears, jaw or tongue. In males, the disease can also cause painful, swollen testicles. The disease can also lead to hearing loss, aseptic meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord).

## **How can I prevent mumps?**

Most people born before 1957 have had mumps disease and are immune to mumps and most people who have had two doses of MMR vaccine will also be protected against mumps. However, 5-10% may still be susceptible to mumps after receiving the two recommended doses. There is evidence that in outbreak settings an additional dose of MMR may decrease transmission of mumps.

As information about the outbreak emerges, recommendations are being refined to maximize the impact of immunization measures. UC Berkeley students living in congregate settings such as campus dormitories are now considered the highest priority for receiving MMR and are strongly encouraged to receive an additional dose of MMR, regardless of their vaccination status. Any other members of the UC community who have received two or fewer doses of vaccine and want to reduce their risk of mumps should receive an additional dose of MMR.

## **What should I do if I have symptoms?**

- Stay home and do not attend classes or work and limit your contact with others as much as you can for 5 days after the onset of symptoms to help prevent the spread of the disease.
- Contact Tang Health Center at 510-643-7197 to determine if mumps testing is indicated.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough and clean your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

<sup>1</sup> MMR vaccine is not appropriate for pregnant women or for individuals with weakened immune systems.