



Dear Parent/Carer

## **Protecting your child against mumps and measles**

We are seeing an increase in the number of cases of mumps across Devon. More than half of the cases are in young people aged 15-24 years, with outbreaks seen at universities and cases reported in schools. If your child has not been vaccinated, we would recommend they receive two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to ensure they are protected. It is easy to check if your child has had the vaccine by contacting your GP and asking if they have had two doses of MMR. If not, then you can arrange for your child to have their MMR vaccine at your GP surgery.

### **Mumps is very contagious**

Mumps is a virus spread in the same way as colds and flu. Mumps is most known for painful swellings at the side of the face under the ears, giving a person with mumps a distinctive "hamster face" appearance. Other symptoms include a high temperature with joint pain and loss of appetite. Swellings are not always present - mumps can sometimes have the same symptoms as other viruses such as glandular fever.

It is important that you contact your GP if you think your child may have mumps so that a diagnosis can be made and advice given.

### **If your child has mumps, you can help prevent it spreading by:**

- washing hands regularly with soap
- using tissues when sneezing, binning them straight away and then washing your hands
- avoiding going to school and attending social gatherings for at least 5 days after the swelling first develops (or other symptoms if swelling is not present)

### **Treatment for mumps**

There is no specific treatment for mumps, but the infection should pass within 1 or 2 weeks. Treatment is used to relieve symptoms and includes:

- getting plenty of bed rest and drinking lots of water
- using painkillers, such as ibuprofen and paracetamol (as indicated on the patient information leaflet)
- applying a warm or cool compress to the swollen glands to help relieve pain

Whilst the symptoms of mumps are usually relatively mild in children, for unprotected adults they can be much more serious.

**For more information or advice** please contact Public Health England on 0300 303 8162 option 1 then option 1 quoting reference number 209209 or visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mumps/>.

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