

Are you in college and under 25? - Protect yourself against mumps

A number of third level colleges have reported mumps outbreaks this year

If you are in college and are under 25 you could be at risk of getting mumps.

Students between 17 and 24 have been most affected by mumps because many of them have not had two doses of MMR vaccine.

**MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella.
Two doses are needed to protect against mumps infection.**

What is mumps?

Mumps is an acute viral illness that causes fever, headache and painful swollen salivary glands.

How is it spread?

Mumps is spread from person to person by coughs and sneezes. It can also be transmitted through direct contact with saliva, including kissing.

How serious is it?

You could be ill enough to miss two weeks from college, studying, taking exams and socialising.

What are the complications?

Generally complications are mild but mumps can cause meningitis, deafness, inflammation of the pancreas, ovaries or testicles.

How can you be protected?

Immunisation with MMR vaccine is the best protection. Two doses of MMR vaccine are recommended.

Who needs to get MMR vaccine?

If you are under 25 and have not had two doses (or are not sure if you have had) two dose of MMR vaccine you should be vaccinated.

Having an extra dose of MMR vaccine will not do you any harm.

Older students usually do not need MMR vaccine as they probably were infected with mumps as young children before the vaccine was available.

Who should NOT get MMR vaccine?

You should not get the vaccine

- if you have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous MMR vaccine or any part of the vaccine
- are pregnant or think you may be pregnant

You should delay getting the vaccine if you have

- a high fever (greater than 38°C),
- a serious illness affecting your immune system or you are taking medication that affects your immune system.

If you have any concerns, talk to your doctor or student health service.

What to expect after getting MMR vaccine?

After getting the vaccine your arm may be sore and/or red where the injection was given. This only lasts a short time.

You may get “mini measles” with a rash and fever 6 to 10 days later.

On rare occasions “mini-mumps” with swelling in the jaw area may occur in the third week after vaccination.

These are not contagious.

How long does it take for MMR vaccine to work?

It can take up to 28 days before you will be protected.

How effective is MMR vaccine for mumps?

Studies estimate that after 2 doses of MMR that 88% of people are protected against mumps.

Where do you get MMR vaccine?

Get in touch with your GP to find out about MMR vaccine.

If you are living away from home or are unable to contact your GP you can contact your student health service.

MMR vaccine is free of charge but you may have to pay an administration fee.

For more information, see www.immunisation.ie