

## Mumps Cases Hit Two Triad Universities

By Administrator

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is encouraging all North Carolinians to make sure they are up to date on their vaccines in light of recent mumps cases at two Triad area universities, Elon and High Point Universities. As of Sept. 26, seven confirmed cases have been reported. State Division of Public Health and local public health professionals are working with student health services at Elon University and High Point University to coordinate response measures, including vaccination of susceptible groups.

Mumps is a vaccine-preventable viral illness best known for causing swelling of the salivary glands below the ears and above the jaw, called parotitis. Mumps can cause several complications including inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) in men and inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) in women.

Mumps is spread by droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of an infected person. A person with confirmed or suspected mumps should stay home from work or school and limit close contact with others for five days after the salivary glands swell, or until mumps is ruled out.

“Anyone who thinks they might have mumps should contact their physician and have appropriate laboratory testing,” said Dr. Zack Moore, North Carolina State Epidemiologist.

The most effective way to prevent mumps is to get vaccinated.

“Although it’s still possible for people who have been vaccinated to get mumps, the risk is much higher in people who are unvaccinated,” Dr. Moore said. “The risk for complications from mumps is also lower in people who are vaccinated compared to those who are not vaccinated.”

If you are unsure of your mumps vaccination status, check with your physician, who will determine if you need a vaccine.

Practicing good hygiene can reduce the risk of spreading illness:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water

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- Cover your mouth when you cough

- Do not share cups or eating utensils with others, which can pass saliva from one person to another