

Pike County Health Department

Ruth Holman, DNP, President, Board of Health
Anita Andress, RN, BSN, Administrator



113 E Jefferson Street
Pittsfield, IL 62363-1420
Tel: (217) 285-4407
Fax: (217) 285-4639

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Contact: Nancy Halpin, RN, 217-285-4407 x124

Vaccine Preventable Diseases in Near-by Counties

Two cases of measles were recently identified in McDonough County.

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness that generally starts out with a fever, malaise, cold symptoms, conjunctivitis, and cough, followed by a rash, and Koplik's spots (tiny white spots with bluish-white center, inside the mouth).

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases known. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been—even if the person is gone!

Measles ranges from an uncomfortable disease to a very serious one. For example, for every 1,000 children who get measles in a developed country like the United States, 1 to 3 of them die, despite the best treatment. Even recently, from 2001 through 2010, an average of 1 out of every 4 people in the United States who got measles had to be hospitalized. Many of these serious cases were among children. Unfortunately, measles outbreaks are becoming more common in the United States.

Multiple cases of mumps have been lab confirmed in Morgan County.

Mumps is an acute vaccine-preventable viral illness transmitted by respiratory droplets and saliva. Some people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and therefore do not know they were infected with mumps. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, and swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis).

Both of these illnesses can largely be prevented by vaccination. Children should receive the first dose of mumps, measles, & rubella-containing vaccine (MMR) at 12-15 months and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. All adults born during or after 1957 should have documentation of one dose of MMR. Adults at higher risk, such as university students, health care personnel, international

travelers, and persons with potential outbreak exposure should have documentation of two doses of MMR vaccine or other proof of immunity.

You might be surprised to learn that disease outbreaks in neighboring counties affect local health department resources here in Pike County also. Pike County Health Department (PCHD) staff responded to news of these neighboring outbreaks even though there have been no lab confirmed cases of mumps in Pike County. This pro-active public health response from Pike County Health Department included the following actions:

- Accurate and up-to-date disease and lab testing information were sent out to all healthcare providers in Pike County, including Pike County Ambulance/EMS and Illini Community Hospital infection control and emergency departments.
- Dr. Ronald Johnson, PCHD Medical Director and Dr. Ayca Raif from Quincy Medical Group were consulted for their expertise.
- School nurses in Pike County were encouraged to be alert for signs and symptoms of these illnesses.
- Immunization records of PCHD staff members were reviewed, in order to assure vaccination status of our own staff members. Other agencies employing health care workers were encouraged to know vaccination status of their employees.
- PCHD fielded questions from the public and assisted with retrieval of immunization records for many involved in the neighboring outbreaks.
- Communicable Disease (CD) program staff from neighboring health department talked with PCHD staff to discuss epidemiology, infection control measures, providing additional MMR vaccine, and scope of the outbreak.
- MMR vaccine was purchased so PCHD would have doses on hand for those needing vaccination.
- PCHD staff participated in Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) regional conference call regarding the mumps outbreak.

Communicable Disease/ Immunization nurse coordinator at Pike County Health Department, Nancy Halpin RN says “This once again underscores the importance of vaccination. Vaccine preventable diseases are still in existence and an outbreak can easily spread to neighboring communities. This is also a good example of the wonderful collaboration Pike County Health Department has with other agencies and providers when the need arises. Smart public health is a community effort. We’re not in this alone!”

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For more information about vaccination preventable diseases and recommended immunizations, contact Nancy Halpin RN at Pike County Health Department, 285-4407 extension 124.

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