

MUMPS OUTBREAK AT CAMP VERMONT
20 Staff Members and Campers Affected

For Immediate Release:

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Statement: Relating to the identification of mumps in 20 staff and campers at Camp Vermont: The virus was identified in a staff member who incubated the illness while at university in England, and while his case emerged during staff training, it was not immediately identified because the American population is vaccinated for this illness, and its appearance in the United States is so rare. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the local health department, both of which were contacted as soon as the contagious illness was suspected, determined that complete compliance was observed on the part of the camp and its medical personnel. They also acknowledged a 5 percent failure rate for the vaccine, which is consistent with the limited spread of the virus in our camp community.

Mumps is a generally benign infection of the parotid glands (two of the six salivary glands in the mouth) and is best treated with rest and time. Staff and campers who are showing symptoms are living at the health center until our doctor, using guidelines from the Vermont Department of Health, determines that they are no longer contagious and are okay to resume full participation at camp.

Camp Vermont is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA) and follows the health procedures suggested by ACA and by the Vermont Department of Health, including maintaining detailed health records as required. The health and safety of our campers is our first and foremost concern. All campers and staff were screened upon arrival at camp for signs of contagious conditions, and when symptoms were recognized, we partnered immediately with the CDC and local health officials. They credit our handling of the situation with stemming the spread of the illness. We continue to collaborate with the CDC and to comply with its directives as the illness runs its course.

This unfortunate occurrence is a global health issue. It is not the fault of anyone at Camp Vermont. Similar outbreaks occur in close quarters (like boarding schools) throughout the United States each year. These outbreaks are dealt with quickly and efficiently by school leaders and local health officials—just as we are doing at camp.

(Include a “silver lining” paragraph, such as the following.)

Nearly 20,000 counselors from other countries work at ACA-Accredited camps each summer. This experience provides important lessons in world culture, language, understanding, adventure, and personal growth. Even with a widespread health issue overseas, the effects here have been minimal—and, when such a rare incident occurs, we intensify our efforts to be watchful. Other camps and similar “closed communities” should be equally proactive in identifying symptoms of contagious illnesses and in seeking assistance.

For more information on mumps, please visit the Mayo Clinic’s website at www.MayoClinic.com and search for “mumps.” For an up-to-date status on Camp Vermont’s mumps outbreak, we suggest that you contact the CDC at 1-800-311-3435 or at their online reporting page: www.cdc.gov/contact.

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