



Dramatic Rise of Mumps in North Wales

HEALTH bosses last night warned mumps was on the increase in North Wales, with hundreds falling ill.

More than 2,500 cases were reported in the region last year - that's 16 times greater than the 155 three years ago.

Medics are urging teenagers to consider getting immunised to prevent the potentially killer disease from spreading even further.

Most of those felled by the bug were in their late teens and early 20s, caught in a mass vaccination gap.

Last night, Bangor University chiefs said they were concerned about a repeat of last year's outbreak.

Dozens of students were given MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) jabs when a handful at Bangor's school of education developed mumps.

The outbreak led to a suspension of lectures and teacher training places at local schools.

A university spokesman stressed it was up to individual students to get medical advice.

'We do encourage students to see their own doctors,' she said.

Dr Richard Roberts, consultant in communicable disease control for the National Public Health Service for Wales, said: 'Most cases are occurring in people in their late teens and early 20s.

' This is an age group who are too old to have received two doses of MMR but too young to have caught mumps as a child, because immunisation to protect young children made mumps increasingly uncommon, and by the late 1990s rare.'

He added: 'Mumps can be a serious illness, resulting in hospitalisation and complications but it is largely preventable through MMR immunisation, which protects over 90% of those who receive one dose and 99% of those who have two doses of the vaccine.

'We recommend that children and young adults who have not had the vaccination should see their GP.

'Two doses are recommended for a full course.'

The symptoms of mumps include a low-grade fever and swelling or tenderness in salivary glands and under the jaw.

Symptoms usually appear between 12 and 25 days after a person was exposed to the virus.

It can cause miscarriages in mums-to-be or sterility in men

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