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LA Declares Outbreak of Mumps Among Gay Men

by Winnie McCroy
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The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has announced a major outbreak of mumps infection, reporting more than 40 cases, mostly involving men who have sex with men (MSM).

NewNowNext **reports** that there are some women and heterosexual men among the infected, who have been social with gay men. The majority of those infected were MSM.

"Most transmissions appear to have occurred at large venues such as athletic clubs, bars, theaters and nightclubs," the Health Department said. "The majority of cases have had no documentation of complete vaccination; however, some cases

were fully vaccinated."

Mumps incubation ranges from 12-25 days, but symptoms usually develop 16-18 days after exposure to the virus, and include a fever, loss of appetite, headaches, joint pain, fatigue and swelling at the salivary glands, on the side of the face right below the ears.

Weherville **notes** that orchitis -- inflammation of both or one of the testicles -- is the most common complication and can occur even if your face doesn't swell.

Mumps is an airborne virus spread through saliva, which can happen through an infected person coughing or sneezing, sharing utensils or kissing. It can be prevented with a vaccination of two doses of mumps-containing vaccine.

The Health Department is urging locals to get a mumps vaccination to help protect against the virus, especially as West Hollywood venues are about to be filled with people celebrating L.A. Pride this weekend.

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Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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