



State of New Jersey

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Camp Professionals: What You Need to Know about Keeping Kids Healthy

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This document provides guidance for both day and residential camp professionals on ways to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in their programs and facilities.

While in summer camp, children spend many hours playing, eating, and sometimes sleeping together in close quarters. All of this “togetherness” provides the perfect opportunity for diseases to spread. There have been several outbreaks of diseases within New Jersey (NJ). In April 2009, the United States (US) was faced with the consequences of the novel H1N1 virus. Our experience with this novel virus provided everyone with the opportunity to review and optimize infection control practices.

More recently, the US has been dealing with the largest mumps outbreak since 2006, with cases reported in multiple locations, primarily New York and NJ. As of May 5, 2010, more than 3,000 cases have been identified in the affected jurisdictions with 388 cases reported in NJ. To put the magnitude of the current situation in perspective, NJ reported a total of 4 cases of mumps in 2007 and 13 in 2008. The initial case in the US was traced to an 11 year old child who attended a summer camp in New York. The child contracted the disease while visiting the United Kingdom where there is an ongoing outbreak of disease. Subsequently, other camp attendees and a staff member were reported to have mumps, and transmission continued in multiple locations when the camp attendees returned home. Early identification and isolation of ill individuals is key to preventing disease transmission.

Mumps is a virus that is easily spread from person-to-person. The virus is released into the air and enters another person’s body through the nose, mouth or throat. Mumps causes swelling of one or more of the parotid salivary glands located within your cheek, near your jaw line and below your ears. Symptoms may also include headache, fever, muscle aches, tiredness, and/or lack of appetite. The virus can lead to inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) or ovaries (oophoritis), deafness, and inflammation of the brain (meningitis/encephalitis). For more detailed information about mumps please visit the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Service’s update on the mumps outbreak at http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/mumps_outbreak.shtml . The best protection against mumps is vaccination so it is important to make sure all staff and campers are appropriately immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

According to New Jersey Youth Camp Standards N.J.A.C. 8:25-5.5, all campers need to be immunized with the vaccinations required for child-care center, preschool, or school attendance, as appropriate for the camper's age, according to the immunization schedule set forth at Immunization of Pupils in School, N.J.A.C. 8:57-4. Please visit <http://www.state.nj.us/health/forms/imm-7.doc> to review the Minimum Immunization Requirements Table for School Attendance in New Jersey. Although NJ allows for medical and religious exemptions, NJDHSS, in consultation with the local health department, may recommend the exclusion of unimmunized and under-immunized children from youth camp during a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak or threatened outbreak, as determined by the Commissioner or her designee. During outbreaks of disease, camp administrators are required to report such occurrences to the local health department that has jurisdiction in which the camp is located. For information on disease reporting requirements visit:

http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/reportable_diseases.pdf .

Please be cognizant of the regulations and your responsibilities and communicate them to parents so that everyone is clear about their expectations.

In addition to vaccinations, below are some basic prevention steps for your staff and campers:

- **Promote frequent hand washing** preferably with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

Camps shall have policies and procedures for hand washing. Camps with access to facilities with soap and water should consider the promotion of scheduled, frequent hand washing breaks for staff and campers – particularly prior to eating food. For camps without easy access to such facilities, consider the availability and access to alcohol-based hand sanitizer for staff and campers. Since children will not always wash their hands, camps should consider instituting specific hand washing breaks at multiple points through the day when everyone is required to wash their hands. This might include: the beginning of the day, before snack breaks, before lunch, etc. Staff and children should be educated on appropriate hand hygiene techniques. Information about hand washing is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/handwashing.shtml> . and <http://www.cdc.gov/HandHygiene/index.html> .

- **Promote good “cough etiquette.”** Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or practice the habit of coughing or sneezing into one's inner elbow if tissues are not available. Make sure to dispose of the used tissues properly by placing them in a garbage receptacle. Individuals should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after sneezing or coughing into a tissue. Staff and children should be educated on appropriate cough etiquette. Remember to include information on hand hygiene and cough etiquette in staff and camper orientation sessions and materials. Consider

placing posters in campground buildings that reinforce prevention messages.

- **Stay at home if sick** and encourage parents to keep their children at home if they are sick. Parents must have contingency plans for child care when an ill child is excluded from camp. Residential camps shall identify separate quarters to isolate individuals who have acute illness while infectious to others.
- **Discourage the sharing of eating utensils and straws.**
- **Clean and sanitize frequently-touched surfaces**, (such as desks, doorknobs, computer keyboards, toys) regularly and if they become visibly soiled. Cleaning products routinely used by the camp should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. Linens, eating utensils and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.

Only through your help can we prevent the spread of vaccine preventable diseases. For additional information, please see the additional resources listed below.

Additional Resources:

**New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Vaccine Preventable Disease Program**

Phone: 609-826-4861

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/vpdp/index.shtml>

**New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Public Health Sanitation and Safety Program**

Phone: 609-826-4941

<http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/phss/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Home page for Vaccines and Immunizations Site

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>