

Mumps

Information for the Public

What is mumps?

Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It typically starts with a few days of fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite, followed by swollen salivary glands. You can protect yourself and your family against mumps with vaccination.

What are the symptoms?

Mumps is best known for the puffy cheeks and swollen jaw that it causes. This is a result of swollen salivary glands. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis)

Symptoms typically appear 16-18 days after exposure, but can range from 12-25 days.

Some people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and often they do not know they have the disease.

Most people with mumps recover completely in a few weeks.

How is the mumps virus spread?

Mumps is spread through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat. An infected person can spread the virus by

- coughing, sneezing, or talking,
- sharing items, such as cups or eating utensils, with others
- touching objects or surfaces with unwashed hands that are then touched by others

Mumps likely spreads before the salivary glands begin to swell and up to five days after the swelling begins.

Who is likely to get this illness?

Mumps incidence peaks predominantly in late winter and spring, but the disease has been reported throughout the year. In the absence of an immunization program, mumps typically occurs during childhood.

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What are the complications?

- inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) in males who have reached puberty; rarely does this lead to fertility problems
- inflammation of the brain (encephalitis)
- inflammation of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis)
- inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) and/or breast tissue (mastitis)
- deafness

How is the mumps diagnosed?

Mumps testing should be done by a healthcare provider for mumps serology, viral detection and viral culture, to confirm the diagnosis.

Is there a treatment for mumps?

Currently, there is no specific treatment for mumps. Treatment is supportive.

Can mumps be prevented?

Mumps can be prevented with MMR vaccine. This protects against three diseases: measles, mumps, and rubella. CDC recommends children get two doses of MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. Teens and adults should also be up to date on their MMR vaccination.

Children may also get the MMRV vaccine which protects against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox). This vaccine is only licensed for use in children who are 12 months through 12 years of age.

What should I do if I have mumps or exposed to someone who has mumps?

If you have mumps, you should stay home or avoid contact with people for 5 days after the beginning of your salivary gland swelling.

If you were exposed to someone who has mumps, you should contact your health care provider to evaluate your immune status for mumps. If you develop mumps symptoms, you should seek medical attention immediately and your doctor should notify your health department immediately.