



Mumps

Disease Fact Sheet

What is mumps?

Mumps is a viral infection that can cause swelling of the salivary glands of an infected person.

What are the signs and symptoms of mumps?

The disease begins with low grade fever, headache, muscle pain, and general feeling of discomfort. Commonly, the cheek and jaw area (salivary glands) swell on one or both sides within the first two days of illness.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Infected persons start to show signs of mumps two to three weeks after exposure.

How is mumps spread?

The mumps virus is in the saliva of an infected person and is spread from person to person through the air by coughing, sneezing or simply talking.

When and for how long is a person able to spread mumps?

From two days before the onset of symptoms to the fifth day after symptoms begin.

What are the complications associated with mumps?

Symptoms of mumps typically resolve after a week or two, but mumps can occasionally cause serious complications. The most common complication is inflammation of the testicles in males who have reached puberty; only rarely does this lead to fertility problems. Other rare complications include temporary or permanent deafness, inflammation of the brain and/or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (encephalitis/meningitis), and inflammation of the ovaries and/or breasts in females who have reached puberty.

Who can get mumps?

Anyone who is not immune from either previous mumps infection or from vaccination can get mumps.

Is there a vaccine for mumps?

Yes. Mumps vaccine, given in combination with Measles and Rubella (called MMR vaccine), is recommended for routine administration at ages 12-15 months and 4-6 years. Adults and adolescents not up to date with mumps vaccinations are also recommended to receive MMR vaccine. Two doses of the vaccine are more effective against mumps than one dose of the vaccine and prevent most, but not all, cases of mumps and mumps complications.

Is there a treatment for mumps?

There is no specific treatment for mumps.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of mumps?

The best method to prevent further spread of mumps is for persons infected with the disease to remain home and avoid exposing others who are susceptible to the disease. Persons infected with mumps should remain home for five days after the onset of salivary gland swelling. They should also avoid contact with infants aged <1 year, patients with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women who are susceptible to mumps.