

Mumps- Factsheet

What is mumps?

It is an infection caused by the mumps virus. Sometimes it is called infectious parotitis.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms may include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite followed by swelling of salivary glands. The parotid salivary glands (which are located within your cheek, near your jaw line, below your ears) are the most commonly affected. Symptoms of mumps usually appear within 16 to 18 days after exposure but may appear any time within 12 to 25 days after exposure. Some people with mumps have no symptoms at all.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread in droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes. Mumps can also spread by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of an infected person.

How long are people contagious?

Mumps is contagious from 1 to 2 days before, through 5 days after the onset of swelling.

Who gets mumps?

You can only get mumps once in a lifetime. A person has permanent immunity after having the disease. Usually people born before 1957 have already had mumps. People who receive two doses of the mumps vaccine are much less likely to be infected. The greatest risk of infection is among older children, adolescents, and young adults.

What treatment is available for people with mumps?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Supportive care should be given as needed.

Do infected people need to be kept home from school, work or daycare?

People should stay home from work, school, daycare, or other settings where others could be exposed until 5 days after onset of swelling. (In other words, returning on day 6.)

How can I protect myself and my family from getting mumps?

- Mumps-containing vaccine is the best way to prevent mumps. Two doses of MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) combination vaccine or MMRV (measles-mumps-rubella-varicella) combination vaccine are recommended for all children, starting with the first dose at 12-15 months of age, and the second dose usually given at 4-6 years of age. Students in post-high school educational institutions, international travelers, and health care workers should also have received two doses of MMR. A third dose may be recommended for certain people during an outbreak.

- Wash hands frequently with water and soap and teach children to wash their hands too. (Sanitizing gel may be substituted when hands are not visibly soiled.)
- Always cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and then wash your hands.