

Mumps: Fact Sheet

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a contagious disease that is caused by a virus. Mumps typically starts with a few days of fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite, and is followed by swelling of the salivary glands. Anyone who has not had a previous mumps infection or has not been immunized against the mumps is highly susceptible to getting the mumps. Immunization against mumps significantly reduces the risk of getting the mumps.

Currently, there is no specific treatment for mumps. Supportive care should be given as needed. If someone becomes very ill, they should seek medical attention. **If someone seeks medical attention, they should call their doctor in advance and mention a possible exposure, so that they don't have to sit in the waiting room for a long time and possibly infect other patients.**

What are the symptoms?

Fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears or jaw on one or both sides of the face (parotitis). Note: parotitis occurs in only about half of mumps patients; many viral infections can also cause parotitis.

Are there any complications?

Most people with mumps recover fully. However, mumps can occasionally cause complications, and some of them can be serious. Complications may occur even if a person does not have swollen salivary glands (parotitis) and are more common in people who have reached puberty.

Complications of mumps can include:

- Inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) in males who have reached puberty, which rarely leads to sterility
- Inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) and/or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis)
- Inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) and/or breasts (mastitis) in females who have reached puberty
- Temporary or permanent deafness

How are mumps transmitted?

Mumps is spread by droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes or talks. Items used by an infected person, such as cups or soft drink cans, can also be contaminated with the virus, which may spread to others if those items are shared. In addition, the virus may spread when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and someone else then touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose.

Incubation period ranges from 12–25 days, but parotitis typically develops 16 to 18 days after exposure to mumps virus. Most mumps transmission likely occurs 3 days before the salivary glands begin to swell and 5 days after the swelling begins. Therefore, CDC recommends isolating mumps patients for 5 days after their glands begin to swell.

If you have mumps, there are several things you can do to help prevent spreading the virus to others:

- Minimize close contact with other people, especially babies and people with weakened immune systems who cannot be vaccinated.
- Stay home from work or school for 5 days after your glands begin to swell, and try not to have close contact with other people who live in your house.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash hands well and often with soap, and teach children to wash their hands too.
- Don't share drinks or eating utensils.
- Regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched (such as toys, doorknobs, tables, counters) with soap and water or with cleaning wipes.

Is there a vaccine?

Mumps vaccine is the best way to prevent mumps. This vaccine is included in the combination measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) and measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccines. Two doses of mumps vaccine are needed for long-term protection. Children should receive the first dose of mumps-containing vaccine at 12-15 months and the second dose at 4-6 years. All adults born during or after 1957 should have documentation of one dose.

Additional guidance can be found on the CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/about/index.html>

Need more information?

Please call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department's Communicable Disease Program at 402-441-8053.