



Mumps Fact Sheet

March 2017

What is mumps?

Mumps is a highly contagious viral disease caused by the mumps virus. The most common symptom of mumps is swelling of the glands that produce saliva (spit). This swelling can make the cheek or neck bulge out on one or both sides. Sometimes the virus can cause more serious complications including swelling of the testicles or ovaries, hearing loss or meningo-encephalitis (inflammation of the fluid and tissues surrounding the brain and spine).

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread through close, direct contact with an infected person's mouth and nose secretions. Behaviors that can spread the virus include:

- living in close living quarters
- participation in sporting events where contact with others' secretions may occur
- kissing, coughing or sneezing
- sharing food, drinks or eating utensils
- sharing toothbrushes, mouthguards, towels, cigarettes or lipstick
- sharing mouthed toys (young children) or musical instruments with a mouthpiece.

Preventing mumps

The most important way to reduce your risk of getting mumps is to make sure that you and your family members are vaccinated with 2 doses of the mumps-containing vaccine.

You can further decrease the risk of mumps by reducing exposure to others' mouth and nasal secretions. Don't share food, drinks, water bottles, towels, mouth guards or toothbrushes. Wash your hands thoroughly and often.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

It can take between 12 and 25 days for symptoms to occur after you have been infected. However, you can pass the infection on to others even before you know you are sick. In fact, the time you are most contagious starts 2 days before the symptoms begin until 4 days after the symptoms begin.

The most common symptom of mumps is swelling of the glands that produce saliva (spit). This swelling can make the cheek or neck bulge out on one or both sides. Other symptoms of mumps include:

- fever,
- headache or earache,
- tiredness,
- sore muscles,
- trouble talking, chewing or swallowing, or
- loss of appetite.

Symptoms can be mild or severe, and generally last 7 to 10 days.

Many people who get infected with the mumps virus will have very mild symptoms or not be sick at all. However, they can still spread the disease to others. Sometimes the virus can cause more serious complications including swelling of the testicles or ovaries, hearing loss or meningo-encephalitis (inflammation of the fluid and tissues surrounding the brain and spine). It is therefore important to be vaccinated against mumps.

What to do if you become ill?

If you or your child develops the symptoms of mumps, particularly swelling of the cheeks or neck, see your health care provider immediately. Make sure that you call ahead to ensure that you do not expose others to the disease.

More information

[Mumps](#)

[Chief Public Health Officer Statement: Public Health Reminder Regarding Mumps](#)

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