

Mumps- Factsheet

What is mumps?

It is an infection caused by the mumps virus affecting the salivary glands. 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 puffy cheeks and a painful, swollen jaw on one or both sides. 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 do not show symptoms.

How is mumps spread?

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

How long are people contagious?

Mumps is contagious from 1 to 2 days before swelling starts, through 5 days after swelling starts.

Who gets mumps?

Anyone without immunity to mumps from vaccination or previous disease could get mumps. People who travel internationally to places where mumps is more common, school-aged children, students at post-high school educational institutions, and healthcare workers are more likely to be exposed to mumps.

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 childcare?

People should stay home from work, school, childcare, or other settings where others could be exposed until 5 days have passed since the swelling started. (In other words, returning on day 6.)

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

- Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent mumps. Two doses of the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) combination vaccine or MMRV (measles-mumps-rubella-varicella) combination vaccine are recommended for all children. The first dose is given at 12-15 months of age, and the second dose is given usually 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.