



Mumps FAQ

What is mumps?

Mumps is an infectious disease caused by a virus.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps spreads from person to person via droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The virus may also be spread indirectly when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and then someone else touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose.

Who can get mumps?

Infection can occur throughout childhood. During adulthood, infection is likely to produce more severe disease.

What are the symptoms?

Although mumps does not usually cause serious long-term problems, the more severe symptoms, such as severe swelling of the salivary glands under the jaw bone (parotitis), can be uncomfortable. Nonspecific symptoms such as low-grade fever, headache, body ache, muscle ache, loss of appetite are common. Swelling of the testicles (orchitis) is a common complication after puberty.

How soon do symptoms appear?

It usually takes about 16 to 18 days for a person to notice the symptoms (incubation period). But it may be as short as 12 days or as long as 25 days.

How long is a person able to spread Mumps?

People with mumps are usually considered most infectious from a few days before until 5 days after the onset of parotitis. Therefore, the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention recommends isolating mumps patients for five days after their glands begin to swell.

How is it treated?

There is no cure for mumps, only supportive treatment (bed rest, fluids, and fever reduction).

Is there a way to prevent mumps?

Mumps vaccine is the best way to protect your child against mumps. It is usually given as part of a combination vaccine that protects against three diseases: measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). The MMR vaccine is safe and effective. Most children don't have any side effects from the vaccine. The side effects that do occur are usually very mild, such as a fever or rash. MMR vaccine is safe and effective. A person with two doses of MMR vaccine has about an 88% reduction in risk for mumps; a person with one dose has a 78% reduction in risk for mumps.