



# Fact Sheet: Mumps

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## What is mumps?

Mumps is an acute, contagious viral illness that typically causes swollen salivary glands. Mumps is no longer very common in the United States, but outbreaks continue to occur.

## What are the symptoms?

- Usually start with low-grade fever, headache, muscle aches and tiredness
- Swelling of the parotid salivary glands (parotitis) in front and below the ears peaking in three days and then subsiding. Parotitis can occur on one or both sides of the face causing puffy cheeks and a tender, swollen jaw
- In males, sometimes enlargement and painful swelling of one or both testicles (orchitis) can occur. Rarely, orchitis may result in a decreased sperm count or infertility

Symptoms can appear 12 to 25 days after exposure, typically 16 to 18 days. Some people with the mumps virus have no symptoms.

If a child is suspected of having mumps, their healthcare provider should be called immediately. Most people with mumps recover completely within two weeks.

## How does mumps spread?

The virus is spread through direct contact with saliva or respiratory droplets from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person while coughing, sneezing, or talking. A person may be contagious several days before parotid swelling begins up to five days after the swelling appears. A person with mumps should be isolated at home for five days after the swelling appears. An infected person should avoid

- Contact with others
- sharing items that may have saliva on them, such as water bottles or drinking glasses and cups

## How is mumps diagnosed?

- Mump serological testing for IgM antibodies
- Detection of the virus by PCR assay
- Isolation of the mumps virus by appropriate

clinical specimen (buccal swab)

## How is mumps treated?

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids (i.e., water or juice)
- Tylenol or Ibuprofen can be used to reduce fever and discomfort. Aspirin should not be given to children with viral illnesses since there have been cases associated with the development of Reye Syndrome

## What are the serious complications of mumps?

In children, mumps is usually a mild disease. The disease can be more serious in adults.

Mumps can cause:

- Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain)
- Meningitis (inflammation of the protective membranes lining the brain or spinal cord)
- Hearing loss (deafness)

## How is mumps prevented?

Vaccination is the best way to prevent mumps and mumps complications. The vaccine is given in combination with the measles and rubella vaccines, known as MMR vaccine. The MMR vaccine is safe and effective without side effects for most children. Two (2) MMR injections are needed to be completely immunized. The first dose should be given at 12-18 months of age. The second dose at four through six years of age. During an outbreak of mumps, a third dose of MMR vaccine may be recommended.