

Mumps Fact Sheet

Mumps is an infection of the salivary glands caused by a virus.

The virus enters the body through the airway and then spreads to the rest of the body. The virus can spread to tissues and glands such as the salivary gland, pancreas, testes, and ovaries. The virus in the infected tissues can lead to characteristic symptoms of parotitis (salivary gland swelling) and meningitis (inflammation of the brain and spinal cord covering). Today, most children are vaccinated against mumps, but before routine vaccination in the United States, mumps and its life-threatening complications were more common in infants, children, and young adults.

Mumps virus is spread from person-to-person by airborne droplets and close contact with infected respiratory secretions.

Mumps virus is spread by contact with infected secretions from the nose, throat, or mouth. Mumps is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or shares food or drinks. The most likely time that an infected person can transmit mumps to a non-infected person is from 2 days before symptoms appear to about 5 days after the symptoms appear. Anyone with mumps should not attend childcare, school, work, or other public places for 5 days from the beginning of salivary gland swelling.

Symptoms to look for include:

- Swollen and tender salivary glands (cheek and jaw area)
- Fever
- Headache
- Swollen and tender testes in teenage and adult men

Symptoms usually occur within 12 to 25 days (usually 16 to 18 days) after exposure. Of those people who do get mumps, up to half have very mild or no symptoms and sometimes do not know they were infected with mumps.

Laboratory testing is needed to confirm a mumps infection.

People who think they may have mumps should see a doctor or their local health department **immediately** to be tested because other illnesses exhibit symptoms similar to mumps. Mumps is suspected by having an exposure to the disease, the presence of swollen salivary glands, and other symptoms. In addition, mumps is diagnosed through laboratory testing of the blood, saliva, or urine to help determine if mumps is the cause of such illnesses.

There is no specific treatment for mumps.

Most people recover fully from mumps and do not require antibiotics.

A person in close contact with someone who has mumps should be notified of the exposure, determine if they are susceptible to getting mumps, and be watched for symptoms for 12 to 25 days after exposure. Persons who have not already had mumps infection or have been vaccinated against mumps may need to be excluded from certain activities like work or school for a period of time. The health department will help determine if this is needed.

Mumps can be prevented with a mumps vaccine.

Mumps vaccine is recommended for children at 12 months of age, with a second dose recommended at 4 to 6 years of age. This vaccine is given as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Persons of any age who are unsure of their mumps disease history and/or mumps vaccination history should be vaccinated, especially if they are likely to be exposed. Women should not get vaccinated if they are pregnant or plan to get pregnant within 4 weeks of receiving the vaccine. Age-appropriate vaccination against mumps is required for enrollment in Maryland childcare institutions and schools. For additional information about mumps vaccine, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mmr.html>.