

Mumps

What is mumps?

Mumps is a disease caused by a virus. Mumps is best known for the facial and jaw swelling that can be caused by the virus.

Who can get mumps?

Anyone born January 1, 1957, or later who has not had mumps or has not been vaccinated is susceptible to mumps.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps spreads 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 can also be spread 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.

What are the symptoms of the disease?

Individuals with mumps usually first feel sick with nonspecific symptoms like headache, loss of appetite and low-grade fever. The most well-known sign of mumps is parotitis, the swelling of the salivary glands below the ear. Some people with mumps have very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.

How soon after an infection do the symptoms appear?

Symptoms may appear 12-25 days after exposure, usually 16-18 days after exposure.

When and for how long is a person able to spread mumps?

People can spread mumps from three days before until five days after parotitis (swelling of the salivary glands) begins.

Does infection with mumps make a person immune?

Yes. After illness, a person probably has lifelong immunity to mumps.

Is there a treatment for mumps?

No, there is no specific treatment beyond bed rest, fluids, and control of fever. There may be additional treatment if complications develop.

How serious is mumps?

In children, mumps is usually a mild disease. Adults may have more serious disease and more complications.

What are the complications associated with mumps?

Up to 10% of post-pubertal males experience orchitis (testicular inflammation), which may involve pain, swelling, nausea, vomiting and fever, with tenderness of the area possibly lasting for weeks. Inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) and/or breasts (mastitis) can occur in females who have reached puberty.

An increase in spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) has been found among women who developed mumps during the first trimester of pregnancy in some studies but not others. Deafness, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), and inflammation of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) are also rare complications.

How common is mumps?

Due to good immunization coverage, mumps is now rare in the United States. From year to year, mumps cases can range from roughly a couple hundred to a couple thousand.

In some years, there are more cases of mumps than usual because of outbreaks. A major factor contributing to outbreaks is being in a crowded environment, such as attending the same class or being in a dormitory with a person who has mumps. Mumps outbreaks on university campuses can be common.

Are there vaccines for mumps?

Yes. Mumps is usually combined with measles and rubella in the MMR vaccine.

- Children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine: the first at 12 to 15 months of age and the second at 4 to 6 years of age.
- Adults born before January 1, 1957, are assumed to be immune to mumps. Other adults (except for pregnant women) who have not had mumps or been vaccinated are at risk and should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine. Pregnant women should not be vaccinated until after delivery.
- Certain adults (such as healthcare workers, international travelers, or adults attending post high school educational institutions) should receive two doses of MMR vaccine.

How effective is the mumps vaccine?

MMR vaccine prevents most, but not all, cases of mumps and complications caused by the disease. Two doses of the

vaccine are 88% (range: 66%-95%) effective at preventing mumps; one dose is 78% (range: 49%-92%) effective.

The first vaccine against mumps was licensed in the United States in 1967. By 2005, mumps rates declined by more than 99% thanks to high two-dose vaccination coverage among children.

What can be done to prevent the spread of mumps?

- Protect yourself and your children by vaccinating or ensuring immunity to mumps.
- Wash your hands often with warm water and soap throughout the day.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as glasses, cups, or eating utensils.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with your arm or a tissue (and then throwing the tissue away). Wash your hands after coughing and sneezing.
- Avoid being around people who are ill. Stay home and away from others if you are ill yourself.
- If you think you might have been exposed to mumps and need to seek healthcare, call ahead so appropriate measures can be taken to protect other patients and staff.

For more information:

Spokane Regional Health District
Disease Prevention and Response
(509) 324-1442 | TDD (509) 324-1464