

# Mumps

## What is mumps?

- Mumps is an infection caused by a virus.
- Mumps was a common childhood illness before vaccine became available in the 1970's. People born before 1970 are likely to be immune from natural infection.

## How is mumps spread?

- The virus is spread between people through saliva and respiratory droplets in the air formed when coughing or sneezing.
- Touching an item that was previously touched by an infected person and then touching your eyes or mouth can spread mumps.
- Kissing or sharing eating utensils, water bottles, drinks, lipsticks, cigarettes and other smoking paraphernalia increases the risk of spreading the virus.
- Mumps spreads more easily in crowded environments and where close contact with others commonly occurs such as classrooms, sporting events, bars, and dormitory living.
- **People infected with mumps can spread the virus to others from 7 days before they have developed any symptoms to 5 days after they have developed swollen salivary glands.**

## What are the signs and symptoms of mumps?

- Symptoms occur 14 – 25 days following exposure.
- Symptoms may be mild and include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite.
- People with mumps typically have swelling of the cheeks, jawline and neck due to swollen salivary glands. Swelling can occur on one or both sides of the face or neck.
- Up to 30% of people infected with mumps have no symptoms but can still spread the virus to others.

## What are the complications of mumps?

- Mumps may cause meningitis or encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) which may lead to permanent brain damage.
- Permanent deafness occurs in less than 5 in 100,000 cases.
- About 3 in 10 males (after puberty) develop swollen testicles. About 1 in 20 females (after puberty) develop swollen ovaries. Infertility from mumps is very rare.
- Most people who get mumps recover completely in a few weeks

## How is mumps diagnosed?

- Your health care provider will diagnose mumps from your clinical signs and symptoms. Mumps is confirmed through laboratory testing of urine, blood or a throat swab.

## How do you treat mumps?

- There is no specific treatment.
- Get plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids and eat healthy foods.
- Take acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol, Temptra) as per instructions on container for fever or pain.
- Do NOT take any medication with ASA (e.g. aspirin) if you are under age 20 because of the risk of Reye's syndrome – a serious condition that causes swelling of the liver and brain.
- Since mumps is caused by a virus, antibiotics cannot be used to treat the infection.

## How can mumps be prevented?

- The single most important way to prevent mumps is to be immunized with 2 doses of a mumps-containing vaccine i.e. measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine or measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccine.
- Immunization for mumps is routinely offered to children as 2 doses given at 12 months and 18 months of age. Contact public health for a copy of your immunization record.
- Other measures to prevent mumps are:
  - to cover your mouth and nose when coughing,
  - wash your hands frequently with soap and water,
  - clean frequently touched surfaces, and
  - avoid kissing or sharing personal items such as eating utensils, water bottles, drinks, lipsticks and cigarettes.
- If you think you have been exposed to mumps, watch for symptoms and practice the above prevention measures.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you become ill. **Call ahead so they can prepare to see you without exposing others.**
- **Someone with mumps must not go to school, daycare or work and should stay at home for at least 5 days after the salivary glands became swollen.**

For more information, contact your local [Public Health Office](#), your physician, nurse practitioner or



