

Mumps

Frequently Asked Questions



What is Mumps?

Mumps is a contagious illness that is caused by the mumps virus. Symptoms of mumps include swollen salivary glands (parotitis), fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite. Symptoms of mumps usually develop 14-18 days after a person is exposed to the virus.

What are the symptoms?

Many people with mumps will develop swollen cheeks and jaws, which is a result of swelling of the salivary glands. Most people with mumps get better within 7-10 days. Some persons may have mumps complications including:

- Inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) in males who have reached puberty
- Inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) and/or breast (mastitis) in females who have reached puberty
- Inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis)
- Temporary or permanent deafness

How does it spread?

Mumps virus is present in the saliva and respiratory secretions of an infected person. Mumps is spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Individuals with mumps can spread the virus from 2 days before until 5 days after they develop parotitis.

Who is at risk of developing mumps?

Individuals who have not had two doses of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine or have not had mumps disease are at higher risk for getting the illness. Recent outbreaks have been reported in college students and the tradition-observant Jewish community.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Individuals that are ill with mumps should get plenty of rest, drink fluids and take medication to relieve the symptoms of mumps (i.e., fever reducers). Individuals who experience complications should seek medical attention immediately.

How is it prevented?

The best way to prevent mumps is to get two doses of the MMR vaccine. Vaccine is usually given to infants 12-15 months old and again to children between 4-6 years of age. Anyone who has not been vaccinated should get the MMR vaccine. Anyone born before 1957 is considered immune and does not need to be vaccinated.

- Mumps can also be prevented by:
- Having persons ill with mumps stay home from school and work for 5 days after their glands swell and avoiding close contact with household contacts.
- Always covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you sneeze and cough.
- Washing your hands with soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially before eating or touching your face.
- Not sharing drinking glasses or eating utensils with others.

For more information contact your doctor, refer to <http://www.phila.gov/Health/> or contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6740.

