

MUMPS (Infectious parotitis)

FACT SHEET

What is mumps?

It is an infection caused by the mumps virus.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread by airborne transmission with mucus or droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes.

Who gets mumps?

Anyone, but it is more common in infants, children and young adults. Of people who are not immunized, >85% will have mumps by adulthood, but symptoms may have been mild and therefore not recognized.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

The most common symptoms are fever, headache, and swollen salivary glands under the jaw (sometimes described as “chipmunk cheeks”). The disease can lead to hearing loss, aseptic meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord) and, in 20% to 30% of males who have reached puberty, the disease can cause painful, swollen testicles.

How soon do symptoms appear?

They may appear 12 - 25 days after infection, but usually within 18 days.

How long is an infected person able to spread the disease?

From 3 days prior to the onset of symptoms to 4 days after.

Can infection with mumps occur more than once?

No.

What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no specific treatment. Supportive care should be given as indicated.

Is there a vaccine to prevent mumps?

Yes. Two doses of mumps-containing vaccine, given as combination MMR vaccine, separated by at least 4 weeks, are routinely recommended for all children. The first dose is given on or after the first birthday; the second is given at 4 - 6 years of age. MMR is a live, attenuated vaccine. Pregnant women and persons with immunodeficiency or immunosuppression should not receive live attenuated vaccines.

What can be done to stop the spread of mumps?

Anyone with mumps should not go back to child care, school or work until 5 days after symptoms began or until they are well - whichever is longer. Home isolation is very important to keep from spreading mumps to others. Contacts to a mumps case should have their immunization status evaluated. Anyone who has not received 2 doses of a mumps-containing vaccine (preferably MMR vaccine) should be vaccinated. Persons who may have been exposed should be educated on the signs and symptoms of mumps disease and should seek medical attention as soon as any of these symptoms begin.

Always seek a medical diagnosis from your doctor if you suspect mumps in yourself or your family members.