

# Mumps

## Your questions answered

**What is mumps?** Mumps is a contagious disease that is caused by the mumps virus. Mumps typically starts with a few days of fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite, and is followed by swelling of salivary glands. Anyone who is not immune from either previous mumps infection or from vaccination can get mumps.

**How is mumps transmitted?** Mumps is spread by droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes or talks. Items used by an infected person, such as soft drink cans or eating utensils, can also be contaminated with the virus, which may spread to others if those items are shared. In addition, the virus may spread when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and someone else then touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose.

**What are the symptoms?** Up to half of people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and therefore do not know they were infected with mumps.

The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis)
- Symptoms typically appear 14 to 18 days after infection, but this period can range from 12 to 25 days after infection.

Your health care provider may take a swab of your cheek or throat and draw blood to determine if you have mumps.

**What are the complications?** Mumps is best known for the swelling of the cheeks and jaw that it causes, which is a result of swelling of the salivary glands. It is usually a mild disease, but can occasionally cause serious complications.

The most common complication is inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) in males who have reached puberty; rarely does this lead to fertility problems. Other rare complications include:

- Inflammation of the brain and/or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (encephalitis/meningitis)
- Inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) and/or breasts (mastitis) in fe-

# What Can **YOU** Do?

- males who have reached puberty
- Deafness.

## **How do you prevent mumps and its spread?**

Vaccination is your best form of prevention against mumps. Immunization against mumps is included in the combination Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) and Measles-Mumps-Rubella-Varicella (MMRV) vaccines, is the best way to prevent mumps.

Mumps vaccine effectiveness has been estimated at 62 to 91 percent for one dose and 76 to 95 percent for two doses. The first vaccine against mumps was licensed in the United States in 1967, and by 2005, high two-dose childhood vaccination coverage reduced disease rates by 99 percent.

Children should receive the first dose of mumps-containing vaccine at 12-15 months and the second dose at 4-6 years.

All adults born during or after 1957 should have documentation of one dose. Adults at higher risk, such as university students, health care personnel, international travelers and persons with potential mumps outbreak exposure should have documentation of two doses of mumps vaccine or other proof of immunity to mumps.

Most mumps transmission likely occurs before the salivary glands begin to swell and within the five days after the swelling begins. Therefore, it is recommended that mumps patients are isolated for at least five days after their glands begin to swell.

If you have mumps, there are several things you can do to help prevent spreading the virus to others:

- Minimize close contact with other people, especially babies and people with weakened immune systems who cannot be vaccinated.
- Stay home from work or school for five days after your glands begin to swell and try not to have close contact with other people who live in your house.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow – **not** your hands.
- Wash hands well and often with soap and teach children to wash their hands, too.
- Don't share drinks or eating utensils.
- Regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched (such as toys, door-knobs, tables, counters) with soap and water or with cleaning wipes.

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For more information on mumps, call the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department at (785) 843-0721 or visit us on the web at: [www.ldchealth.org](http://www.ldchealth.org)