



Mumps

What is mumps?

Mumps is a viral illness that causes swelling in the glands around the cheeks and the jaws. Mumps was a very common infection in infants, children and young adults before a vaccine became available in Canada in 1969 to prevent measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). Most people born between 1970 and 1991 have received one dose of the mumps vaccine in the form of a trivalent mumps, measles, rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Mumps is caused by the *paramyxovirus* and is now a rare infection. If a person has swelling of the salivary glands, it may be caused by other bacteria, viruses or a blockage. Any person who is suspected of having mumps and has swelling of the neck lasting two days or more should undergo laboratory testing. Mumps infection can be confirmed by a simple blood test for mumps antibodies. The physician may contact public health to arrange for laboratory testing to rule out mumps infection and prevent an outbreak.

Mumps can affect any person of any age who has not had the disease or been immunized against it. In severe cases mumps can cause complications such as:

- Meningitis (inflammation of the brain and spinal cord with headache or a stiff neck)
- Inflammation and swelling of the testicles in males, which in some cases can result in sterility
- Inflammation and swelling of the ovaries and/or the mammary glands of the breast in females
- Inflammation of the pancreas
- Hearing loss/deafness (one-sided and usually permanent)
- Miscarriage, if infection happens in the first trimester of pregnancy

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms of mumps may appear within 12 to 25 days after exposure to the virus, and may include:

- Painful swelling of one or both salivary glands (located within your cheek, near your jaw line, below your ears), called parotitis
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pains
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Respiratory symptoms similar to a cold may also occur in children less than five years old.

How does mumps spread?

Mumps spreads easily from person-to-person. People with mumps carry the virus in their respiratory secretions – their saliva and the droplets from their nose and throat. When they talk, cough or sneeze, the droplets spread and can enter the mouth and nose of other people, causing new infections.

Mumps can also be spread through sharing food, drinks and kissing.

A person with mumps is contagious from seven days before the swelling appears until five days after the swelling appears.

For further information, please call:

York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653

TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit www.york.ca

How do you prevent mumps?

To avoid getting the mumps, make sure you are adequately vaccinated. Two doses of MMR vaccine are recommended. If you were born between 1970 and 1991, you may have only received one dose of MMR vaccine, and should receive a second dose.

MMR vaccine is effective in about 95 percent of people. Most people will have no side effects however, mild redness, swelling and pain at the injection site may occur. MMR vaccine can cause a rash and/or fever in some people five to 12 days after the needle is given. This may last for a few days. Allergic reactions to the MMR vaccine and other serious reactions are rare.

The vaccine is not recommended for anyone who:

- Has had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of this vaccine
- Is allergic to gelatin, eggs or an antibiotic called neomycin
- Has a disease that lowers the body's ability to fight infections
- Is taking medication that lowers the body's ability to fight infections
- Is pregnant
- Is ill with a fever
- Has received immune globulin or blood transfusions in the past three months
- Has documented evidence of previous infection with each of measles, mumps, and rubella
- Is certain they have previously been vaccinated with two doses of MMR

Note: Women should consult with their doctor before receiving the MMR vaccine if they are trying to become pregnant. Contact your doctor if you discover you are pregnant after getting vaccinated with MMR vaccine.

To avoid spreading the illness to others, a person with mumps should:

- Stay home
- Stay away from infants less than one year of age and other people who are not immune
- Wash hands well and often
- Avoid sharing eating utensils and other personal items

Objects and surfaces that are frequently touched by the sick person should be cleaned often.

What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no specific treatment for this mumps. Acetaminophen and hot or cold compresses may relieve the pain in the salivary glands.

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