

What is mumps?

Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a virus. Even though the MMR vaccine has drastically reduced mumps cases, outbreaks continue to occur. Outbreaks most commonly occur in places where people have had prolonged, close contact with a person who has mumps, such as attending the same class, playing on the same sports team, or living in the same dormitory.

How is mumps spread?

It spreads through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat. An infected person can spread the virus by:

- coughing
- sneezing
- talking
- sharing items with others, such as cups or eating utensils, and
- touching objects or surfaces with unwashed hands that are then touched by others.

Mumps likely spreads before the salivary glands begin to swell and up to five days after the swelling begins.

What are the signs and symptoms of 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)

Some people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and often they do not know they have the disease.

How long after infection do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear 16-18 days after infection, but this period can range from 12-25 days after infection.

Who is most at risk?

People at highest risk are unvaccinated individuals, pregnant women, infants younger than 12 months of age, and those with weakened immune systems.

What type of health problems are caused by mumps?

Most people with mumps recover completely in a few weeks. In rare cases, mumps is deadly.

Serious illness may include:

- Meningitis (swelling of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord)
- Deafness (temporary or permanent)
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Orchitis (swelling of the testicles) in males who have reached puberty
- Oophoritis (swelling of the ovaries) and/or mastitis (swelling of the breasts) in females who have reached puberty

How is mumps diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider can diagnose mumps by asking about symptoms. Medical tests may be needed to confirm the diagnosis. Such tests may include swabbing the inside of your cheek and a blood test.

How is mumps treated?

There is no cure for mumps, only supportive treatment (bed rest, fluids, and fever reduction).

How can mumps be prevented?

The best protection against mumps for individuals and the community is through routine immunization with the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine, if you or your child has not previously had the mumps disease. In almost all cases, people who receive the MMR vaccine are protected against mumps. However, in rare cases, people who get the vaccine can still become infected with mumps if exposed to the virus.

Are there people who should not get the MMR vaccine?

Yes, some people should not get the MMR vaccine or should wait before getting it. This includes persons with allergies to the vaccine and those with medical conditions

(e.g., pregnancy) or who are moderately to severely sick. If you have further questions about whether to get the vaccine, discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Can adults who were previously vaccinated still get the mumps?

Yes. Adults and even children who received one dose of the MMR vaccine may have some protection against the virus, but are considered susceptible and may still get a milder version of mumps. That's because with the passage of time, a person's protection from childhood vaccines may decrease.

What if I am exposed to mumps and don't know my vaccination status or I never had the MMR vaccine?

Individuals who may have been exposed to mumps and have not been vaccinated should voluntarily stay home (no work, school, church, shopping, or recreational activities where one may come into contact with the public) for 26 days from parotitis onset.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal healthcare provider
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)
- [Utah Department of Health](#)

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