

Mumps

What is mumps?

Mumps is an infectious disease caused by the mumps virus. It was once very common in children, but due to vaccination it is now very uncommon.

How is it spread?

Mumps is spread through infected saliva or mucus from the mouth or nose. Spread occurs by coughing, sneezing, sharing utensils with others or touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.

Who is at risk?

Mumps can affect any age group, but is more severe in those post-puberty. Vaccination or one episode of the disease usually produces long-term immunity.

Signs and symptoms

The symptoms generally develop 12 to 25 days after infection with the usual time being 16 to 18 days. Common symptoms of mumps are fever, loss of appetite, tiredness and headaches, followed by swelling and tenderness of one or more salivary glands. The parotid salivary glands, located in the cheek at the jaw line below the ears, are most commonly affected. About a third of infected people do not show any symptoms at all. Males may get sore and swollen testicles and females may have a sore lower abdomen. The pain and swelling usually takes about a week to get better.

Mumps can sometimes make some people very sick and cause long-term problems, such as inflammation of the brain or hearing loss, but this is rare.

Infectious period

A person can be infectious 7 days before the swelling until 9 days after the swelling of the salivary glands. People are most infectious from 2 days before until 4 days after the onset of symptoms.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Simple analgesics can help reduce pain and fever. Rest and drinking plenty of fluids is important. Warm or cold packs to the swollen glands may help.

Prevention

Mumps can be prevented by immunisation. Mumps containing vaccine prevents most cases of mumps and decreases the severity of the illness if you do get mumps. The measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine is part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule at 12 months of age and MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, varicella) vaccine is given at 18 months of age.

People born during or after 1966 should ensure they have received 2 doses of a mumps containing vaccine.

MMR and MMRV vaccines contain a live attenuated virus and should not be given during pregnancy or to women contemplating pregnancy. Pregnancy should be avoided for 28 days after vaccination.

How is mumps controlled?

People with mumps should stay away from work, school and childcare for 9 days following the onset of swelling of the salivary glands or until the swelling goes down, whichever occurs first. Laboratories, doctors, school principals and directors of child care centres are required to report all cases of mumps to the local Centre for Disease Control.

Contact For more information contact the Public Health Unit's Centre for Disease Control in your region.

The full list of contacts of contacts can be found at [NT Health](#).

Location	Phone	Fax	Email
Darwin	(08) 8922 8044	(08) 8922 8310	CDCSurveillance.DARWIN@nt.gov.au
Katherine	(08) 8973 9049	(08) 8973 9048	CDC.Katherine@nt.gov.au
Tennant Creek	(08) 8962 4259	(08) 8962 4420	CDC.Barkly@nt.gov.au
Alice Springs	(08) 8951 7540	(08) 8951 7900	CDC.alicesprings@nt.gov.au
Nhulunbuy	(08) 8987 0357	(08) 8987 0500	CDCGove.DoH@nt.gov.au

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