

Fact Sheet: Mumps

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a viral infection commonly affecting the salivary glands. The disease has its highest occurrence in late winter and spring. Most adults born before 1957 have been infected naturally and are probably immune.

What are the signs & symptoms?

- About 1/3 of people who are infected with the mumps virus have no symptoms.
- Symptoms may first occur with facial pain when eating, and earache.
- Inflammation of the parotid salivary glands in front of and below the ears.
- Fever or headache.
- Swelling usually goes away in about ten days.
- Occasionally the first sign is painful swelling of one or both testicles.

Symptoms first appear 16 to 18 days after exposure. Call your doctor if you suspect your child has mumps. A blood test and/or salivary gland culture should be done to confirm that the illness is mumps.

How is it spread?

- The virus is spread by direct contact with infected droplets through coughing and sneezing or direct contact with saliva.
- The virus can be most easily spread to others during the 48 hours before symptoms begin.
- A person may be contagious as long as 3 days before swelling begins until 5 days after the swelling appears.
- A person with mumps should be isolated at home for the 5 days after the swelling appears.

What are the serious complications of mumps?

Mumps in males can result in a condition called orchitis. This is when one or both testicles become inflamed, enlarged and painful. Rarely, orchitis may result in a decreased sperm count and even infertility.

Mumps may also lead to encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain tissue or the lining of the central nervous system), deafness, and inflammation of the pancreas.

How is it treated?

- Rest; drink plenty of fluids (i.e., water or juice).
- Tylenol can be used to reduce fever and discomfort. **Aspirin should not be used in children with viral illnesses since there have been cases associated with the development of Reye Syndrome.**

How is it prevented?

The best way to prevent mumps is with the highly effective vaccine. The vaccine is given in combination with the measles and rubella vaccines, known as MMR vaccine. Two (2) MMR injections are needed to be completely immunized. Teenagers and adults who do not know if they are protected against mumps should ask their doctor or clinic about the MMR vaccine.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

