

Mumps

Fact Sheet



Paul R. LePage, Governor

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What is mumps?

It is an infection caused by the mumps virus.

Who can get mumps?

Anyone who is not immune from either previous mumps infection or from vaccination can get mumps. Before the routine vaccination program was introduced in the United States, mumps was a common illness in infants, children and young adults. Because most people have now been vaccinated, mumps is now a rare disease in the United States. Of those people who do get mumps, up to half have very mild, or no symptoms, and therefore do not know they were infected with mumps.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

The most common symptoms are fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite followed by onset of parotitis (swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears, on one or both sides).

Are there complications of mumps?

The most common complication is the inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) in males who have reached puberty, but 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 females who have reached puberty
- Spontaneous abortion particularly in early pregnancy (miscarriage)
- Deafness, usually permanent

How soon do symptoms appear?

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

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread by mucus or droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes. Surfaces of items (e.g. toys) can also spread the virus if someone who is sick touches them without washing their hands, and someone else then touches the same surface and then rubs their eyes, mouth, or nose.

How long is an infected person able to spread the disease?

Mumps virus has been found in respiratory secretions 3 days before the start of symptoms until 9 days after onset. Although mumps virus has been detected on rare occasions for up to 9 days after symptom onset, the patient is most infectious within the first 5 days. Therefore, mumps patients should be isolated for 5 days following onset of symptoms (parotitis).

What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no specific treatment. Supportive care should be given as needed. If someone becomes very ill, they should seek medical attention. If someone seeks medical attention, they should call their doctor in advance so that they don't have to sit in the waiting room for a long time and possibly infect other patients.

How do I protect myself and my family?

Mumps vaccine (usually referred to as MMR) is the best way to prevent mumps. Other things people can do to prevent mumps and other infections is to wash hands well and often with soap, and to teach children to wash their hands too. Eating utensils should not be shared, and surfaces that are frequently touched (toys, doorknobs, tables, counters, etc) should also be regularly cleaned with soap and water, or with cleaning wipes.

Where can I get more information?

You can contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821 or check the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <http://www.cdc.gov>.