

Mumps

Your questions answered

What is mumps?

Mumps is a contagious disease that is caused by a virus.

What are the symptoms?

Mumps typically starts with a few days of fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite, followed by swollen salivary glands (or a swollen jaw/cheek area).

How is mumps transmitted?

An infected person can spread the virus through the following:

- Coughing, sneezing or talking.
- Sharing items, such as cups, cigarettes, Chapstick and eating utensils.
- Touching objects or surfaces with unwashed hands that are then touched by others.

People with mumps can spread the disease before the salivary glands begin to swell and up to five days after the swelling begins.

What are the complications?

Mumps can occasionally cause complications, including:

- inflammation of the brain (encephalitis).
- inflammation of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).
- inflammation of testicles, ovaries and/or breast tissue.
- deafness.

What should I do if I think I have mumps?

You should call your health care provider and isolate yourself. Anyone who suspects mumps should stay home from work, school and any social activities.

How can I prevent spread?

You can help prevent spread of mumps and other illnesses by:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Avoiding sharing drinks, cigarettes, Chapstick and eating utensils.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, computers, phones and counters.
- Check your vaccination status, and make sure you are up-to-date with the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine. If you're unsure, contact your health care provider.

** This fact sheet is for information only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation. If you have any questions about the disease described above or think that you may have an infection, consult with your health care provider.*