

Frequently Asked Questions

What is mumps?

Mumps is caused by a virus. Mumps causes swelling of one or more of the parotid salivary glands located within your cheek, near your jaw line and below your ears.

Who gets mumps?

Anyone who has not already had mumps or has not received the mumps vaccine can get the disease. It is a common childhood disease, but adults can also get mumps. The disease in adults causes more complications; more than half of the deaths due to mumps happen among people over 19 years of age. There are still cases of mumps around the world where populations are not vaccinated against the disease.

How do people get mumps?

Mumps is spread from person to person. Humans are the only ones who can carry and spread the disease to one another. When an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes, the virus is released into the air and enters another person's body through the nose, mouth or throat. People can also become sick if they come in contact with the mucus or saliva (spit) from an infected person.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

The symptoms of mumps are:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of the parotid salivary glands

Are there complications with a mumps virus infection?

In children, mumps is usually a mild disease. Adults may have more serious disease and more complications. Although severe complications due to mumps are rare, the following complications can still occur:

- Swelling of the brain or of the tissue lining the brain and spinal cord
- Swelling of the testes
- Swelling of the ovaries and/or breasts
- Miscarriage
- Deafness, usually permanent

How is mumps diagnosed?

A health care provider will observe symptoms and take blood samples to find out if a person is infected with mumps.

What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no cure for mumps, only supportive treatment (bed rest, fluids and fever reduction). Most people will recover on their own.

How can mumps be prevented?

Mumps is a vaccine preventable disease. Getting vaccinated against mumps will protect people from getting the disease. The mumps vaccine is given in combination with the vaccines for measles and rubella. This combination vaccine follows a two-dose schedule (one shot at 12 months and a second shot at four to six years of age).

Where can I get more information on mumps?

- Your health care provider
- Your local health department
- NJ Department of Health <http://www.nj.gov/health>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>

This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation with a health care professional.

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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