

MUMPS

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a virus that commonly causes swelling of one or more of the salivary glands, usually the parotid glands (salivary glands located on either side of the face, near the ear and mouth), causing parotitis (inflammation of the parotid glands).

How is Mumps spread?

Mumps is a contagious disease that is spread from person-to-person through saliva or droplets from the mouth or nose of an infected person. It is spread through sneezing, coughing, kissing or sharing items such as food, drinks, cigarettes, water bottles, musical instruments, etc. A person with mumps is able to spread infection from 7 days before to 5 days after symptoms develop.

What are the symptoms of Mumps?

Once you come into contact with the mumps virus it takes from 12 to 25 days (commonly 16 to 18 days) for symptoms to develop. Symptoms of mumps include swelling of the glands behind the ears and in the neck, fever, headache, muscle aches and pains, tiredness and loss of appetite. These symptoms can last up to 10 days.

What are the complications of Mumps?

Complications of mumps can include:

- Inflammation of the brain and spinal cord (Meningitis);
- Swelling of the testicles (orchitis) or ovaries (oophoritis);
- Pancreatitis; or
- Hearing loss.

Pregnant women who become infected with mumps during the first trimester of pregnancy are at risk of miscarriage, but mumps has not been associated with congenital abnormalities.

Is there treatment for Mumps?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Acetaminophen as well as hot or cold compresses may relieve the pain in the salivary glands.

How can Mumps be prevented?

Immunization provides the best protection against mumps. The vaccine to protect against mumps is provided free in Ontario as part of the publicly funded routine immunization schedule.

The first dose of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine is recommended when a child is 12 months of age, followed by a dose of measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (MMRV) vaccine at 4 to 6 years of age.

Adults born in 1970 or later should have 2 doses of MMR vaccine. Those born between 1970 and 1992 may have had only one dose of MMR vaccine in childhood and should get a second MMR vaccine if they are not up to date. Adults born before 1970 have likely been infected with mumps and are assumed to be immune.

It is also important to always wash your hands well and often, avoid sharing glasses and utensils, and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Stay home from school or work if you are ill.

What should I do if I think I have Mumps?

If you have symptoms of mumps, please visit your doctor as soon as possible. Call your doctor's office first to let them know that you are coming and you suspect that you have mumps. This will allow the doctor to take precautions in the office to protect other patients.

Tests for mumps include:

- Cheek and/or throat swab;
- Bloodwork;
- Urine sample.

If you are diagnosed with or suspected to have mumps, you should isolate yourself at home until 5 days after the start of salivary gland swelling or until mumps is ruled out by laboratory testing.

Talk to your doctor or call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 to check your immunization status or if you have any questions about mumps.