

Mumps

Mumps is an illness due to infection with the mumps virus.



Mumps is a notifiable condition¹

How mumps is spread

Mumps virus is spread when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes small droplets containing infectious agents into the air. The droplets in the air may be breathed in by those nearby. Infection may be spread by contact with hands, tissues and other articles soiled by infected nose and throat discharges. Mumps virus is also spread by direct contact with the saliva of an infected person.

Signs and symptoms

Mumps occurs most commonly in children and adolescents, although symptoms are more severe in adults. About 30% of cases will have no symptoms at all (asymptomatic infections) or only mild symptoms.

When present, symptoms include:

- > swelling of the glands on the sides of the face and along the jaw line with swelling and tenderness starting just below and in front of one or both ears (see image)
- > fever
- > headache
- > inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) occurs in 20% of adult males
- > inflammation of the ovaries (oophoritis) occurs in about 5% of adult females.



Image Courtesy Public Health Image Library (PHIL), Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-USA)

Despite popular opinion, sterility following infection is rare. Another rare complication is inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). Meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) from mumps is probably more common and may be accompanied by hearing loss.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis is suspected following clinical presentation and can be confirmed by laboratory testing of saliva collected from an oral or buccal (the lining inside the mouth) swab or by a blood test (serology).

Incubation period

(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)

Generally 14 to 25 days, usually 18 days.

Infectious period

(time during which an infected person can infect others)

Up to 6 days before swelling of the glands begins and up to 5 days after the onset of swelling. Asymptomatic infections can still result in spread of infection. Exposed non-immune people should be considered infectious from the 12th to the 25th day after exposure whether or not they have symptoms.



Treatment

Treatment of the symptoms includes giving plenty of fluids. Paracetamol may be given for fever and pain. There is no specific antiviral treatment. Aspirin should not be given to children under 12 years of age unless specifically recommended by a doctor.

Prevention

- > persons with mumps should not attend childcare, preschool, school and work until 5 days after the onset of swelling
 - > tissues and other objects soiled with nasal secretions should be disposed of appropriately
 - > mumps is best prevented by the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) combination vaccine or the measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) combination vaccine
 - > almost 100% of people who have had 2 doses of a mumps-containing vaccine will be protected against mumps
 - > vaccination of contacts* after exposure will not stop the infection, though it will protect against future exposures.
- * A contact is any person who has been close enough to an infected person to be at risk of having acquired the infection from that person.

Useful links

Immunisation www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation

> Vaccines

SA Health website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

> Exclusion periods from childcare, preschool, school and work

> When you have a notifiable condition

¹ The law requires doctors and laboratories to report some infections or diseases to SA Health. These infections or diseases are commonly referred to as 'notifiable conditions'.

You've Got What? 5th Edition

Communicable Disease Control Branch

Telephone: 1300 232 272 Email: HealthCommunicableDiseases@sa.gov.au

The SA Health Disclaimer for this resource is located at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/youvegotwhat



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