

MUMPS

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a disease caused by the mumps virus. Before the introduction of the mumps vaccine the disease was common in childhood, with about 30,000 cases of mumps reported each year in Canada. Now mumps is more common in young adults.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually start about 16 to 18 days after infection. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle pain, tiredness, swollen and painful cheeks and neck, pain around the ears, difficulty swallowing, and swelling of the testicles or ovaries. Mumps can also cause temporary deafness due to fluid in the middle ear. Persons who become seriously ill can develop swelling of the brain (encephalitis) or of the lining of the brain (meningitis), arthritis, deafness or sterility. Mumps infection during the first trimester of pregnancy has been linked to an increase rate of miscarriage.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread through close contact with an infected person. The virus can be found in the air after someone who is infected with mumps coughs or sneezes and can be inhaled. The virus can also be spread by direct contact with infected nasal or throat secretions through sharing food, drinks, cigarettes or kissing someone who has the virus.

A person can spread mumps from about two days before to nine days after swelling of the cheeks and neck.

How is mumps diagnosed?

Mumps is diagnosed by a history of exposure to the disease, symptoms, and laboratory testing. Tests can include a blood test or taking a sample from the throat, urine or spinal cord fluid.

Who is at risk of mumps infection?

Although it is most often a childhood disease anyone at any age who has not had the disease or been immunized are at risk. Most mumps outbreaks occur in adolescents and young adults who have had only one dose of the vaccine.

How can mumps be prevented?

The best way to protect against mumps is to be immunized. As part of the New Brunswick [Routine Immunization Schedule](#), measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is given at 12 and 18 months of age.

Adults born in 1970 or later who have not had mumps or received two doses of the vaccine are eligible to receive publicly funded MMR vaccine.

People with mumps should stay away from childcare centres, school and work for nine days after neck and cheek swelling. Covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, disposing soiled tissues, washing hands well and not sharing eating utensils, food or drinking cups will also help to reduce the spread of infection.

If anyone has been in close contact with someone who has mumps they should consult a health-care provider.

How is mumps treated?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Supportive care in hospital may be needed for severe infections but most people recover at home. Symptoms such as fever and headache may be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®). Warm or cold packs on the swollen glands may provide relief. Drink plenty of fluids such as water, juice and soup and get plenty rest. Avoid sour foods or sour liquids as the inflamed salivary glands are very sensitive to sour tastes.

ASA or Aspirin® should **NOT** be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye's Syndrome with some virus infections.

What is the public health response?

Health-care providers, hospitals and laboratories, schools and childcare centres must report all cases of mumps to Public Health. Public health staff will interview the health-care provider and patient (or care-givers) to find out how the infection occurred, identify other people at risk of infection, implement control measures (such as immunization and restrictions on attending school or work) and provide other advice.

Further Information

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, [local Public Health office](#) or Tele-Care 811.

Useful websites:

- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion <http://www.immunize.cpha.ca>
- Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>
- Canadian Pediatric Society <http://www.cps.ca>

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