

Mumps is an acute viral illness that causes a painful inflammation and swelling of the saliva glands. These glands include the parotid, submaxillary, sublingual and buccal salivary glands. Mumps used to be a common infectious disease of childhood until a vaccine was developed in 1967 to immunize children against the virus that causes the disorder. However, recent outbreaks of mumps among adolescents and young adults have raised questions about lifetime immunity from the vaccine. Mumps is a contagious viral disease that is transmitted through saliva by direct contact, or in the form of airborne droplets from the nose, throat or mouth. The virus enters the body through the upper respiratory tract. Since 1967 when an effective and safe vaccine was developed, mumps has become uncommon. It affects males and females in equal numbers. Among those not immunized, the disease strikes most often in children between the ages of five and fifteen, but adults can also be affected. In recent years outbreaks of mumps on college campuses in the United States have raised question about long-term immunity from the mumps vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is trying to determine whether people during specific years should be re-vaccinated.