

Mumps Antibody



Does this test have other names?

Mumps IgM and IgG antibodies, mumps PCR assay, mumps viral culture

What is this test?

This test looks for antibodies to the mumps virus in your blood.

Mumps is a contagious disease that often begins with flu-like symptoms. These include fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and loss of appetite. The best-known symptom of the disease is swollen salivary glands. This causes painful swelling between the ear and jaw. But this swelling doesn't happen in everyone with the mumps. Some people have no symptoms at all.

When you have the mumps, your immune system makes antibodies to fight the virus. These are called mumps IgM and IgG antibodies. You will also develop mumps antibodies after the mumps vaccine.

Widespread vaccination of children has made mumps infections rare in the U.S. But the disease hasn't gone away entirely. Mumps is often mild in children, but it can cause complications. These include:

- **Meningitis.** Symptoms include a severe headache and stiff neck. Meningitis happens in up to 10% of all mumps cases, but often doesn't cause lifelong harm.
- **Testicular inflammation.** Up to half of boys who get the mumps develop this painful complication.
- **Damage to the testicles.** Sterility is rare.
- **Ovarian or breast inflammation**
- **Deafness in one or both ears.** This complication develops in 1 out of every 20,000 people.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if your healthcare provider suspects that you have the mumps, especially if you haven't been vaccinated against the disease. Symptoms of the mumps include:

- Low-grade fever
- Muscle aches
- Exhaustion
- Headache
- Lack of appetite
- Swollen jaw (parotitis)

You may also have this test to find out if you have immunity to mumps, either from a past infection or from a vaccine.

You may also have this test to rule out mumps in cases of suspected meningitis, or inflammation of the lining of the brain, or a salivary gland infection.

If you are an adult, it's likely that a case of mumps will be more serious than if you contracted it as a child.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order a saliva or urine test for the mumps virus itself. If you have symptoms of meningitis, your provider may also test your cerebrospinal fluid for the mumps virus.

Your provider may also order a hemagglutination inhibition test to look for the mumps virus. Other viruses can cause a swollen jaw and other symptoms that are similar to mumps. Your provider may do other tests to make sure you don't have other infections.

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

If IgG antibodies are found, it means you have had a previous infection or were vaccinated against the mumps. These antibodies are not typically found early after you are exposed to the virus but appear over time and remain in your body for life.

If IgM antibodies are found, it's likely that you have an active mumps infection or recently had one. These antibodies appear very early after exposure to the virus, reach a peak concentration, and then decline over a period of several weeks.

Even if you show symptoms of mumps, but test negative for IgM, it's still possible that you have a mumps infection. Further tests can confirm or rule out the diagnosis.

How is this test done?

The test is done with a blood sample. A needle is used to draw blood from a vein in your arm or hand.

Does this test pose any risks?

Having a blood test with a needle carries some risks. These include bleeding, infection, bruising, and feeling lightheaded. When the needle pricks your arm or hand, you may feel a slight sting or pain. Afterward, the site may be sore.

What might affect my test results?

Having a mild case of the mumps or the mumps vaccine in the past may affect your results.

Exposure to Epstein-Barr virus, adenovirus, human herpes virus 6, and parainfluenza viruses 1, 2, and 3 may affect your results.

How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to prepare for this test. Be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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