

MUMPS FACT SHEET

What is mumps?

Mumps is an infection caused by a virus.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Most people experience fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis). In children, mumps is usually a mild disease, but it can cause some complications. Adults may have more serious disease and more complications.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually begin 16–18 days after infection, but this period can range from 12–25 days after infection. Some people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and often they do not know they have the disease.

How does mumps spread?

Mumps spreads from person to person via droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The virus may also be spread indirectly when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and then someone else touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose.

What can be done to reduce the spread of mumps?

You can do the following to prevent the virus from spreading: 1) wash your hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds, 2) cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, 3) avoid close contact with sick people, such as kissing, or sharing cups or eating utensils, and 4) clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys, doorknobs, tables, and counters.

Is there a vaccine for mumps? Yes. Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against mumps. The

mumps vaccine has been combined with the measles and rubella vaccine into a single vaccine known as the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. The MMR vaccine provides protection against all three diseases. The MMR vaccine is given as a shot, frequently as two separate doses. The first dose of MMR should be given on or after the child's first birthday; the recommended age range is from 12–15 months. The second dose is usually given when the child is 4–6 years old, or before he or she enters kindergarten or first grade.

How is mumps treated?

There is no specific treatment for the virus. Treatment is supportive and based on the patient's clinical condition.

Should a person with mumps stay home from work or school?

A person with mumps is usually considered most infectious from a few days before until 5 days after the onset of parotitis. Therefore, a person with the mumps should stay at home for 5 days after their glands begin to swell.

What should be done if a person is exposed to mumps?

If the exposed person has not been vaccinated against mumps, receiving the vaccine after exposure to the virus will not help prevent disease if the person has already been infected. However, if they did not become infected after this particular exposure, getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against future infection with mumps virus.

Where can I get more information?

Information about mumps and other related health topics can be found at www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit www.doh.dc.gov or call (202) 442-9371.