

Mumps

Frequently Asked Questions

What is mumps?

Mumps is caused by a virus. It leads to swelling of one or more of the parotid salivary glands, located in the cheeks near the jawline and below the ears.

Who gets mumps?

Anyone who has not had mumps or has not been vaccinated can get the disease. Mumps is more common in children, but adults can also be infected. Adults are more likely to experience complications, and more than half of mumps-related deaths occur in people over 19 years of age. Mumps still occurs worldwide, especially in areas where vaccination rates are low.

How do people get mumps?

Mumps spreads from person to person. Humans are the only known carriers of the virus. When an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes, the virus is released into the air and can enter another person's body through the nose, mouth, or throat. People can also become infected by direct contact with saliva or mucus from an infected person.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of the parotid salivary glands

Are there complications from mumps?

Mumps is usually a mild illness, especially in children. Adults are more likely to experience complications. Although rare, complications may include:

- Swelling of the brain or surrounding tissues (encephalitis or meningitis)
- Swelling of the testes (orchitis)
- Swelling of the ovaries and/or breasts
- Hearing loss, which can be permanent

How is mumps diagnosed?

A health care provider diagnoses mumps by evaluating symptoms and confirming the infection with laboratory testing.

What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no specific cure for mumps. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms, such as rest, fluids, and fever reduction. Most people recover on their own.

How can mumps be prevented?

Mumps is a vaccine-preventable disease. The best protection is vaccination.

The mumps vaccine is given as part of the MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, and rubella) in a two-dose schedule:

- First dose at 12 months of age
- Second dose at 4–6 years of age

Where can I get more information on mumps?

- Health care providers
- Local health departments: localhealth.nj.gov
- New Jersey Department of Health: nj.gov/health
- National Foundation for Infectious Diseases: nfid.org/infectious-disease/mumps/

This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation with a health care professional.