



MUMPS

What is mumps?

Mumps is an infection caused by the mumps virus.

How is it spread?

Mumps virus is spread through close contact with an infected person by their nose and throat secretions from coughs and sneezes. It is also spread by contact with an infected person's saliva through sharing drinks, food or by kissing.

What are the symptoms?

Mumps usually starts with fever, aches and pains, and loss of appetite. Other symptoms may include headache, neck stiffness, stomach ache, drowsiness, confusion, or dizziness. After one or more days, the salivary glands become swollen and painful.

About 20 per cent of infected children have no symptoms.

When do symptoms start?

The illness develops on average 16 to 18 days' after exposure to the virus.

How long are people infectious?

Individuals are infectious up to seven days before and nine days after swelling of the salivary glands begins.

How can mumps be prevented?

Mumps is a vaccine-preventable disease. All children receive mumps containing vaccine at 12 and 18 months of age. Adults should consult with their public health nurse regarding their eligibility to receive the mumps containing vaccine.

Families should practice the following good health habits:

- Clean hands well and often and teach children to clean their hands too.
- Do not share eating or drinking utensils.
- Clean surfaces that are frequently touched, including toys, door knobs, tables, and counters regularly with soap and water or cleaning wipes.
- Minimize close contact with other people when they are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, put your used tissue in the trash can and clean your hands. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.

What is the treatment?

There is no effective treatment for mumps. Pain can be reduced with acetaminophen. Hot or cold compresses may also ease the pain in the salivary glands.