

Mumps

What is mumps?

Mumps is a viral infection that primarily affects the saliva glands located between the ear and the jaw.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms of mumps include low-grade fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, and swollen salivary glands under the ears or jaw on one or both sides of the face (parotitis).

What health problems does mumps cause?

Up to 30 percent of all people infected with the mumps virus do not have symptoms. Orchitis (swelling of the testicles) is a common symptom in males after puberty. Rarely, swelling of the spinal cord and brain (encephalitis) occurs.

How is mumps diagnosed?

Mumps may be diagnosed by looking at symptoms and laboratory test results. Healthcare providers may collect samples from the mouth or throat, as well as urine and blood samples to test for the virus. There are other illnesses that can cause similar symptoms, so it is important that the correct laboratory testing is done.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps can be spread when a person with mumps coughs or sneezes near you, or if you touch fluids from the mouth or nose of a person with mumps and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Sharing beverage containers, eating utensils, cigarettes, and kissing are other examples of how the virus can be spread in fluids between individuals.

How long is a person with mumps contagious?

Mumps can be spread 2 days before symptoms appear through about 5 days after. Mumps is most contagious 48 hours before the illness begins.

Is there a vaccine for mumps?

Yes. Mumps vaccine is contained in the MMR vaccine (Measles, Mumps, Rubella). One dose of mumps vaccine will be effective in approximately 80 percent of people vaccinated, but 2 doses of mumps vaccine will be effective in approximately 90 percent of people. This means it is still possible for someone with 2 doses of MMR to get mumps.

What can be done to prevent mumps?

The best way to prevent mumps is to get vaccinated. Persons who have mumps should stay at home for 5 days after swelling starts so that they do not spread it to others.

Is there a treatment for mumps?

No, only symptom care.

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