

*Mumps is a contagious viral infection that occurs mainly in school-aged children. Immunisation with MMR vaccine prevents the disease. People with mumps should stay away from others for nine days after the onset of swelling.*

## Mumps

**Last updated:** 17 January 2008

### What is mumps?

Mumps is an infectious disease caused by the mumps virus. In the past, mumps infection was very common in childhood. Due to immunisation, it has become uncommon in Australia.

### What are the symptoms?

- Common symptoms of mumps are fever, loss of appetite, tiredness and headaches followed by swelling and tenderness of the salivary glands. One or both of the parotid salivary glands (which are located within the cheeks, near the jaw line, below the ears) are most frequently affected
- About one third of infected people do not show any symptoms at all.
- Mumps is usually a more severe illness in people infected after puberty.
- Complications from the mumps are uncommon and can include inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), the testicles (orchitis), the ovaries (oophoritis), breasts (mastitis), spontaneous abortion and hearing loss. Sterility (inability to have children) in males is extremely rare.

### How is it spread?

- Mumps is spread when a person breathes in the mumps virus that has been coughed or sneezed into the air by an infectious person. The mumps virus can also spread from person to person via direct contact with infected saliva.
- People with mumps can be infectious up to seven days before and nine days after swelling of the salivary glands

begins. Maximum infectiousness occurs between 2 days before to 4 days after the onset of symptoms.

- The time from being exposed to the virus and becoming sick can range from 12 to 25 days but is most commonly 16 to 18 days.

### **Who is at risk?**

Anyone who comes into contact with infectious mumps can get mumps, unless they have been infected in the past or have been immunised.

### **How is it prevented?**

- People with mumps should stay at home for nine days after the onset of swelling to help stop spreading the virus to others.
- MMR vaccine protects against mumps, measles and rubella and is part of the standard vaccination schedule. MMR vaccine should be given to children at age 12 months and again at four years of age.
- People born after 1965 should ensure they have received two doses of MMR vaccine.

### **How is it diagnosed?**

The doctor will usually diagnose mumps based on the person's symptoms and signs alone. A blood test or sample from the throat, urine or spinal cord fluid can confirm the diagnosis.

### **How is it treated?**

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Simple analgesics may reduce pain and fever. Warm or cold packs to the swollen glands may provide relief.

### **What is the public health response?**

- Laboratories, school principals and directors of childcare centres must report all cases of mumps to their local public health unit. These reports provide statistics to help understand trends in the incidence of mumps in the community.
- People with mumps should stay away from childcare, school and work for nine days after the onset of the swelling.

## Further information - Public Health Units in NSW

For more information please contact your doctor, local public health unit or community health centre - look under NSW Government at the front of the White Pages

Metropolitan Areas	Location	Number	Rural Areas	Location	Number
Northern Sydney/Central Coast	Hornsby	02 9477 9400	Greater Southern	Goulburn	02 4824 1837
	Gosford	02 4349 4845		Albury	02 6080 8900
South Eastern Sydney/Illawarra	Randwick	02 9382 8333	Greater Western	Broken Hill	08 8080 1499
	Wollongong	02 4221 6700		Dubbo	02 6841 5569
Sydney South West	Camperdown	02 9515 9420		Bathurst	02 6339 5601
Sydney West	Penrith	02 4734 2022	Hunter/New England	Newcastle	02 4924 6477
	Parramatta	02 9840 3603		Tamworth	02 6767 8630
Justice Health Service	Matraville	02 9311 2707	North Coast	Port Macquarie	02 6588 2750
				Lismore	02 6620 7500

See full details of Public Health Units at

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/infectious/phus.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/infectious/phus.asp)