

***Mumps is contagious viral infection that occurs mainly in school-aged children. Immunisation with MMR vaccine prevents the disease.***

# MUMPS

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## What is mumps?

Mumps is an acute disease caused by the mumps virus. In the past, mumps infection was very common in childhood. Due to immunisation, it has become less common 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 post puberty.
- Complications from the mumps are rare but 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 until the swelling in the salivary glands disappears, or up to nine days after the onset of swelling (whichever is sooner) to help stop spreading the virus to others.
- A vaccine that only protects against mumps is not available in Australia; however 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 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.

<b>Further information – Public Health Units in NSW</b>					
For more information please contact your doctor, local public health unit or community health centre – look under <i>NSW Government</i> at the front of the White Pages.					
<b>Metropolitan Areas</b>			<b>Rural Areas</b>		
<b>Northern Sydney / Central Coast</b>	Hornsby	02 9477 9400	<b>Greater Southern</b>	Goulburn	02 4824 1837
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<b>Justice Health Service</b>	Matraville	02 9311 2707		Lismore	02 6620 7500
<b>NSW Department of Health</b>	Nth Sydney	02 9391 9000			
<b>NSW Health website</b>	<a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au">www.health.nsw.gov.au</a>				© NSW Department of Health 2006