

Mumps Fact Sheet

Mumps is an infection of the salivary glands caused by a virus

Mumps usually occurs in school-age children, although young adults may also catch the disease. Almost everyone born before 1957 has already had mumps. It is most common in late winter and spring.

Mumps virus is spread by contact with infected secretions from the nose or throat

The virus is present in these secretions from six days before onset of symptoms up to nine days after salivary gland swelling. During this period a person can spread the virus. Children should not attend school for 9 days from the beginning of salivary gland swelling.

Symptoms to look for:

- Swollen and tender salivary glands (sides of the cheeks)
- Swollen and tender testes in teenage and adult men
- Fever

As many as one person out of three who has mumps will not have any symptoms. Mumps symptoms begin 14 to 25 days (usually 15 to 18 days) after exposure.

Although most people recover fully, mumps can cause complications

Complications of mumps include infections of the brain (encephalitis) and the covering of the brain (meningitis), orchitis, and deafness. Pregnant women who get mumps during the first 3 months of pregnancy are at risk of having miscarriages. Once you have had mumps, you are immune and can't catch it again.

Mumps can be prevented with mumps vaccine

Mumps vaccine is recommended for children at 12 months of age, with a second dose recommended at 4 to 6 years of age. This vaccine is given as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Persons of any age who are unsure of their mumps disease history and/or mumps vaccination history should be vaccinated, especially if they are likely to be exposed. Women should not get vaccine if they are pregnant or plan to get pregnant within 3 months after getting vaccine.

A pregnant woman should check with her doctor if she has been in contact with a case

A pregnant woman should check with her doctor if she has been in contact with a person

who has mumps or if she has symptoms of mumps. Pregnant women do not necessarily need to be excluded from settings where mumps cases are occurring since the risk to any pregnant woman depends on whether she is already immune (from vaccination or catching the disease as a child). Each exposure needs to be individually evaluated. The doctor may want to check her blood to see if she is already immune to mumps.