

NEWS FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

Mumps (Infectious parotitis).

What is mumps?

It is a disease caused by the mumps virus.

Who gets mumps?

Past infection with mumps makes a person immune to mumps; most people born before 1957 most likely have already had mumps. In addition, people who receive two doses of the mumps vaccine are much less likely to be infected. The greatest risk of infection occurs among older children, adolescents, and adults.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread in droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes. Mumps can also spread by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of an infected person.

What are the signs and symptoms of mumps?

About one in three persons infected with mumps virus do not have any signs or symptoms of illness. The most common signs and symptoms of mumps include fever, headache, and swelling and tenderness of one or more salivary glands. Swelling of the testicles occurs in 20-30% of infected males - this does not usually result in sterility. Mumps can also cause central nervous system disorders such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal column). Other complications include miscarriage of a pregnancy, arthritis, pancreatic involvement, or deafness.

How soon after infection do signs and symptoms occur?

Signs and symptoms of mumps usually appear within 18 days after exposure, but may appear any time within 12 to 25 days after exposure.

When and for how long is a person able to spread mumps?

Mumps is contagious from three days before until five days after the onset of swelling.

What is the treatment for mumps?

Supportive care to relieve symptoms may include applying intermittent ice or heat to the affected neck area, and pain relievers (e.g., acetaminophen). Warm salt water gargles, soft foods, and extra fluids may also help. Avoid fruit juice or acidic foods, since these stimulate the salivary glands, which can be painful.

Is there a vaccine to prevent mumps?

Yes. This is generally given as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. MMR is usually given on or after a child's first birthday. A second vaccination is recommended, again in combination with measles and rubella vaccine, at 4-6 years of age. 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.

What can be done to prevent the spread of mumps?

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community. Children with mumps should not attend school, and adults should not work, until five days after swelling began or until they are well, whichever is longer. Measures such as covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands frequently, and not sharing food or eating utensils can also help. A person who may have had contact with a mumps case should be evaluated by their physician.

Please do not hesitate to call the Health Office @ 231-4488 ext.3911 if you require further assistance.