Mumps and the Vaccine (Shot) to Prevent It

Last updated February 2014

The best way to protect against mumps is to get the measles-mumps-rubella shot (called the MMR shot). Doctors recommend that all children get the MMR shot.

Why should my child get the MMR shot?

The MMR shot:

- Protects your child from mumps, a potentially serious disease (and also protects against measles and rubella)
- Prevents your child from getting a fever and swollen glands under the ears or jaw from mumps
- Keeps your child from missing school or childcare (and keeps you from missing work to care for your sick child)

Is the MMR shot safe?

Yes. The MMR shot is very safe, and it is effective at preventing mumps (as well as measles and rubella). Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. But most children who get the MMR shot have no side effects.

What are the side effects?

Most children don't have any side effects from the shot. The side effects that do occur are usually very mild, such as a fever or rash. More serious side effects are rare. These may include high fever that could cause a seizure (in about 1 person out of every 3,000 that get the shot) and temporary pain and stiffness in joints (mostly in teens and adults).

Is there a link between the MMR shot and autism?

No. Scientists in the United States and other countries have carefully studied the MMR shot. None has found a link between autism and the MMR shot.

What is mumps?

Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads easily through coughing and sneezing. There is no treatment for mumps, and it can cause long-term health problems.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Mumps usually causes the following symptoms for about 7 to 10 days:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite (not wanting to eat)
- Swollen glands under the ears or jaw

Some people who get mumps do not have symptoms. Others may feel sick but will not have swollen glands.



Doctors recommend that your child get 2 doses of the MMR shot for best protection. Your child will need one dose at each of the following ages:

- 12 through 15 months
- 4 through 6 years

Infants 6 months to 11 months old should have 1 dose of the MMR shot before traveling abroad.

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Is it serious?

In most children, mumps is pretty mild. But it can cause serious, lasting problems, including:

- Meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord)
- Deafness (temporary or permanent)
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Orchitis (swelling of the testicles) in males who have reached puberty
- Oophoritis (swelling of the ovaries) and/or mastitis (swelling of the breasts) in females who have reached puberty

In rare cases, mumps is deadly.

How does mumps spread?

Mumps spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Mumps can spread before swollen glands appear and for 5 days afterward.

Where can I learn more about the MMR shot and my child?

To learn more about the MMR shot, talk to your child's doctor, call 1-800-CDC-INFO, or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Family Physicians, and American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend children receive all vaccines according to the recommended schedule.