

Mumps

Definition:

Mumps is a disease of children and young adults caused by a paramyxovirus. It usually affects the glands on one or both sides of the face. These glands, called parotid glands, make saliva. Mumps is a mild, self-limiting disease that usually disappears without causing long-term effects. However, complications may occur, such as encephalitis or sensorineural deafness. Orchitis (a painful inflammation of the testes that might result in sterility) occurs in 20% of young adult males who develop mumps. Some vaccinated people may still get mumps if they are exposed to the virus. However, disease symptoms are milder in vaccinated people.

Symptoms:

Symptoms of mumps show up about two to four weeks after exposure to the virus. Some people may have no symptoms or very mild symptoms. The first symptoms may be similar to flu symptoms, such as:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches or pain
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness

Swelling of the salivary glands usually starts within a few days. Symptoms may include:

- Swelling of one or both glands on the sides of the face.
- Pain or tenderness around the swelling.

Transmission:

Mumps spreads through direct contact with saliva or respiratory droplets from the mouth, nose, or throat. An infected person can spread the virus by:

- Coughing, sneezing, or talking.
- Sharing items that may have saliva on them, such as water bottles or cups.

An infected person can spread mumps from a few days before his or her salivary glands swell up to five days after the swelling begins.

Treatment:

- Rest
- Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as ibuprofen (Advil, others) and acetaminophen (Panadol, others).
- A cold or warm cloth for swollen salivary glands.

- A cold cloth or ice pack for swollen testicles.
- Drinking plenty of fluids.