



MUMPS

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a disease caused by the mumps virus.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually start about 16 to 18 days after infection. The following are common symptoms of mumps:

- swelling of the cheek or neck on one or both sides
- fever,
- headache or earache,
- tiredness,
- sore muscles,
- trouble talking, chewing or swallowing, or
- loss of appetite.

Persons who become very ill can develop swelling of the brain (encephalitis) or of the lining of the brain (meningitis), arthritis, deafness or sterility (unable to have children). Mumps infection during the first trimester of pregnancy has been linked to an increase rate of miscarriage.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread through close contact with an infected person. You can become infected by breathing in virus when in close contact with someone who coughs or sneezes. The virus can also be spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of an infected person through sharing:

- food, drinks, eating utensils or saliva (kissing);
- toothbrushes, mouthguards, towels, cigarettes or lipstick; or
- toys that young children bring to their mouth or musical instruments with a mouthpiece.

An infected person can spread mumps from about 7 days before to 9 days after swelling of the cheeks and neck.

How is mumps diagnosed?

A health care provider will ask you if you have been in contact with someone who has mumps, what your symptoms are, and may order laboratory testing. Tests can include a blood test or taking a sample from the throat, urine or spinal cord fluid.

Who is at risk of mumps infection?

Most cases of mumps occur in children; however anyone, at any age, who has not had the disease or been immunized is at risk. Most mumps outbreaks occur in adolescents and young adults who have had only one or no dose of the vaccine.

How can mumps be prevented?

The best way to protect yourself against mumps is to be immunized. Since the introduction of the mumps vaccine, the number of reported mumps cases in Canada has decreased by more than 99%. Now mumps is more common in young adults. As part of the New Brunswick [Routine Immunization Schedule](#), measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is given at 12 and 18 months of age.

Adults born in 1970 or later who have not had mumps or received two doses of the vaccine are eligible to receive free MMR vaccine.

People with mumps should stay away from childcare centres, school and work for 5 days after neck and cheek swelling. They should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, throw away dirty tissues, wash hands well and not share eating utensils, food or drinking cups.

People who have been in close contact with someone who has mumps should consult a health-care provider.

How is mumps treated?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Supportive care in hospital may be needed for severe infections but most people recover at home. Symptoms such as fever and headache may be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®). Warm or cold packs on the swollen area may provide relief. Drink plenty of fluids (water, juice, soup) and get plenty of rest.

ASA or Aspirin® should **NOT** be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye's Syndrome with some virus infections.

What is the public health response?

Health-care providers, laboratories, schools and childcare centres must report all cases of mumps to Public Health. Public health staff will talk to the health-care provider and patient (or care-givers) to find out how the infection occurred, identify other people at risk of infection, suggest actions to help stop the spread of mumps (such as immunization and restrictions on attending school or work) and provide other advice.

Further Information

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, local [Public Health office](#) or Tele-Care 811.

Useful websites:

- Immunize Canada <https://www.immunize.ca>
- Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>
- Canadian Pediatric Society <http://www.cps.ca>