



## Mumps Fact Sheet

### **What is mumps?**

Mumps is caused by a virus and is generally described as a mild disease that causes swollen glands on one or both sides of the neck. Some people that are infected never show symptoms at all.

### **Who gets mumps?**

Mumps usually occurs during childhood, but adults who have not been vaccinated against mumps may also become infected.

### **How is mumps spread?**

Mumps is spread through saliva and droplets from the nose and mouth. In other words, it is spread through the air after a person coughs or sneezes, especially if they don't cover their nose or mouth.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

The first symptoms appear after about 18 days, but can develop anytime between 12 to 25 days after contact with an infected person.

### **How long do the symptoms last?**

Symptoms of mumps disease tend to decrease after 1 week and are usually gone by 10 days. If testicular swelling develops, it usually subsides after 1 week, but tenderness may last for several weeks.

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### **How long can an infected person spread mumps?**

The maximum infectious period is considered to be from 2 days before to 4 days after onset of illness; virus has been isolated from saliva 7 days before to 9 days after onset of parotitis (swelling).

### **Can a person get mumps more than once?**

No. One infection of mumps protects a person for the rest of their life. It is a myth that if a person's glands become swollen only on one side that they can get the disease on the other side later.

### **Should infected people be excluded from school or work?**

Yes. Children should be excluded from school and adults from the workplace until 9 days after swelling of the glands begins.

### **Is there a treatment for mumps?**

No. However, young children (or any adult who isn't protected) should receive protection from mumps vaccine (usually given with measles and rubella vaccine as MMR). The recommended age for immunization of children is 12-15 months of age. Some adults born after 1956 may not be protected against mumps and should be vaccinated.

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### **Does mumps vaccine cause reactions?**

No adverse reactions were reported in large-scale field trials. Occasionally, low grade fever or a mild rash or swelling may occur. Rarely, central nervous system dysfunction may occur, about once in every 1 million doses administered.

### **Where can a person receive mumps vaccine?**

County health departments provide mumps (MMR) vaccine free of charge for children less than 19 years of age. Some private physicians also provide these services, so check with your doctor.

*For further information, contact the  
Oklahoma City-County Health  
Department (405) 425-4437*

revised 04/2013

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