



## **MUMPS FACT SHEET**

### **What is mumps?**

Mumps is an acute viral illness characterised by fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands.

### **Who gets mumps?**

Although older people may get the disease, mumps usually occurs in children between the ages of five and fifteen. Mumps occurs less regularly than other common childhood communicable diseases. The greatest risk of infection occurs among older children. Mumps is more common during winter and spring.

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

Mumps is transmitted by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of infected individuals.

### **What are the symptoms of mumps?**

Symptoms of mumps include fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands, usually the parotid gland (located just below the front of the ear). Approximately one-third of infected people do not exhibit symptoms.

### **How soon after infection do symptoms occur?**

The incubation period is usually 16-18 days, although it may vary from 14 to 25 days.

### **What complications have been associated with mumps?**

Swelling of the testicles occurs in 15 to 25% of infected males. Mumps can 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 arthritis, kidney involvement, inflammation of the thyroid gland and breasts, and deafness.

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

Mumps is contagious seven days prior to and five days after the onset of the symptoms. A person is most contagious 48 hours prior to the appearance of symptoms.

**Does past infection with mumps make a person immune?**

Yes. Immunity acquired after contracting the disease is usually permanent.

**Is there a vaccine for mumps?**

Yes. Mumps vaccine is given on or after a child's first birthday, and is given in combination with measles and rubella vaccine. A second dose of mumps is given pre-school, around three years and four months. The vaccine is highly effective.

**What can be done to prevent the spread of mumps?**

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunisation in the community. Children should not attend school during their infectious period (5 days from onset of symptoms).

**South Midlands and Hertfordshire PHE Centre**

Beacon House, Dunhams Lane, Letchworth Garden City SG6 1BE

Tel: 0300 303 8537 - Fax: 0300 303 8541

Email: [smh@phe.gov.uk](mailto:smh@phe.gov.uk) [phe.smh@nhs.net](mailto:phe.smh@nhs.net)

[www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)

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