

Mumps

What is it?

Mumps is a serious and highly infectious viral disease prevented by the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccination.

How is it spread?

Mumps is spread from an infected person by saliva or mucous droplets when coughing, sneezing, or talking. It can be spread via face to face contact within a metre, or by touching an object infected from saliva or mucous, such as a used tissue or keyboard. Antibiotics will not treat this infection or reduce your risk of catching mumps.

What are the symptoms?

Early symptoms of mumps include:

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

The salivary glands on one or both sides of the face, cheeks or jaw may become swollen and sore after two days.

Recovery

Most people recover from mumps however some individuals can develop rare complications. Men and adolescent boys can experience pain and swelling in their testicles, which in rare cases can result in infertility. Females can experience ovarian inflammation. For pregnant women there is risk of miscarriage in the first three months. In some people mumps can cause permanent hearing loss. In very few cases, mumps can lead to inflammation of the brain and surrounding tissue (meningitis).

Protecting yourself and others

The best way to protect against mumps is to be vaccinated with two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. In New Zealand MMR vaccination is routinely given at age 15 months and again at four years. However, during an outbreak children are eligible for their first MMR vaccine at 12 months and can get a second dose four weeks later.

Contact your doctor if you are unsure if you have been vaccinated, or if you need to catch-up with a second dose. MMR vaccination is free for those who have not received two doses of the MMR vaccine.

If you suspect mumps call your doctor or Healthline for advice on 0800 611 116.

For questions about immunisation contact the Immunisation Advisory Centre on 0800 Immune or www.immune.org.nz

Adapted from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service Mumps – Factsheet