

## Mumps

Mumps is an illness caused by a virus. The virus is spread through saliva, so you can catch mumps from being around someone who already has it. Mumps is spread by contact with an infected person who coughs or sneezes near you, by sharing their food or drink, by direct contact with their saliva or mucous or through touching a surface where droplets of their saliva or mucus have been left. This illness was very common before the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine was introduced.

### Signs and Symptoms

- Fever
- Headache
- Puffy-looking cheeks
- Muscle aches
- Earache
- Tiredness
- Pain with chewing or swallowing
- Swelling of the salivary glands around the cheeks, jaw and under the chin.
- Teenage boys may have swelling of the testicles. Girls may have swelling of the ovaries causing stomach pain.

One in five people with mumps show no signs or symptoms of it. When symptoms do appear, it is about 2 or 3 weeks after being exposed to the illness.

### Treatment of Mumps

There is no treatment for mumps except rest and drinking plenty of fluids (Picture 1). (Antibiotics are not used to treat mumps or other infections caused by a virus.) Symptoms usually go away on their own after 2 weeks. Serious problems are rare but may include deafness, swelling of the brain, spinal cord, testicles, breasts or ovaries and pregnancy loss.

### Preventing Mumps

The MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is the only way to prevent mumps. Children should have the first dose right after their first birthday (12 to 15 months old) and a second dose before they enter kindergarten (4 to 6 years old). Not all children should get the MMR vaccine, so be sure to talk with your doctor first.



**Picture 1** Drink plenty of liquids and get lots of rest.

## **When to Keep Your Child Home from School or Childcare**

Keep your child home from school or childcare for 9 days after the swelling has started and until the swelling has gone away and the child feels well enough to take part in childcare or school activities.

## **When to Call the Doctor**

Call your child's doctor if:

- Your child is over 6 months old and has a fever over 102°F, or under 6 months of age with a temperature over 100.4°F.
- The mumps symptoms have not gone away after two weeks.
- There is swelling anywhere besides the salivary glands around the face.