

Mumps can be serious, but most people with mumps recover completely in a few weeks. While infected with mumps, many people feel tired and achy, have a fever, and swollen salivary glands on the side of the face. Others may feel extremely ill and be unable to eat because of jaw pain, and a few will develop serious complications. The most serious complication is inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), which can lead to death or permanent disability.

Symptoms

Mumps is best known for the puffy cheeks and swollen jaw that it causes. This is a result of swollen salivary glands.

The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis)

When you have mumps, you should avoid prolonged, close contact with other people until at least five days after your salivary glands begin to swell because you are contagious during this time. The time it takes for symptoms to appear after a person is exposed to the virus can range from 12 to 25 days. Staying home while sick with mumps is an important way to avoid spreading the virus to other people. People who are infected with mumps don't get sick right away—it can take 2 to 4 weeks for them to show signs of infection.

Some people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, and often they do not know they have the disease. Most people with mumps recover completely in a few weeks.

Prevention

Mumps outbreaks can occur any time of year. A major factor contributing to outbreaks is being in a crowded environment, such as attending the same class, playing on the same sports team, or living in a dormitory with a person who has mumps.

MMR vaccine prevents most, but not all, cases of mumps and complications caused by the disease. Two doses of the vaccine are 88% (range: 66 to 95%) effective at protecting against mumps; one dose is 78% (range: 49% to 92%) effective. The MMR vaccine protects against currently circulating

mumps strains. High vaccination coverage helps limit the size, duration, and spread of mumps outbreaks.

In addition to staying away from others when you have mumps, you can help prevent the virus from spreading by

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoiding sharing drinks or eating utensils.
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, tables, counters.