Mumps

What is Mumps?
Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It is best known for the puffy cheeks and swollen jaw it causes.

What are the symptoms?
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis)

When do symptoms start?
Symptoms typically appear 16-18 days after a person has been exposed to the mumps virus, but can range from 12-25 days after exposure.

How is it spread?
It is spread through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person by:
- Coughing, sneezing, or talking,
- Sharing items, such as cups or eating utensils, with others, and
- Touching objects or surfaces with unwashed hands that are then touched by others

How long is a person contagious?
Mumps is contagious, 2 days before and until 5 days after the salivary gland swelling begins.

How is the disease diagnosed?
Laboratory testing is needed to confirm mumps. Testing includes a throat swab and blood specimen from individuals with mumps-like symptoms. (It is helpful to know if you have been near someone with mumps or have traveled to an area with a mumps outbreak.)

How is mumps treated?
There is no specific treatment for mumps.

Who is most at risk?
Anyone who has not had the illness or been vaccinated against mumps.

Is there a vaccine available?
There are two combination vaccines used to prevent mumps: measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccine. The current recommendation is a two-dose schedule. The first dose at 12 to 15 months of age, the second at school entry (4 to 6 years of age).

What should I do if I am exposed to mumps?
If unvaccinated and/or susceptible to mumps, watch for signs and symptoms of the illness for 12 to 25 days after exposure. Under certain circumstances unimmunized children may need to be excluded from school attendance for 26 days following the last day of exposure to a person with mumps.

How can I prevent the spread of mumps?
- The best prevention is immunization.
- Persons with mumps must stay home and away from others for five days after onset of salivary gland(s) swelling.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with your sleeve or a tissue. Dispose of used tissues.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose or mouth. Children may need help with handwashing.
- Clean and disinfect anything that comes in contact with secretions from the nose or mouth.
- DO NOT share anything that you put in your mouth (i.e. foods, beverage containers, eating utensils, lip balm, smoking materials)

For further information visit: http://www.cdc.gov/mumps/

Promptly report mumps cases to Saint Louis County Department of Public Health by calling: 314-615-1630

Reviewed 03/2018