

Mumps

Mumps is a highly infectious disease that can spread easily between people who have not had two doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine. If you've caught mumps you usually become unwell around two to three weeks after being in contact with someone who has the virus. Swollen glands on the side of your face are the most common symptom.

How it spreads

Mumps can be passed on through breathing, coughing, and sneezing near others, or through contact with infected saliva (e.g. kissing, or sharing food and drink).

Mumps spreads more easily amongst people who haven't been immunised with two doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine.

Symptoms

Symptoms of mumps include:

- a painful swelling in one, but usually both saliva glands, behind the jaw
- high temperature
- pain when chewing and swallowing
- sore throat
- tiredness
- loss of appetite

- mild stomach (tummy) pains
- dry mouth
- headache

Symptoms can occur anytime two to three weeks after you have been in contact with someone who has the virus.

If you or your child have symptoms

Stay home and call your GP or family doctor for advice if you have symptoms.

You can also call Healthline for free anytime on 0800 611 116.

If you feel unwell with mumps symptoms it's important to stay home until you've spoken to a health professional.

Please do not visit a medical centre or hospital without calling first as you may risk passing on the virus to others (unless it is an emergency).

What happens if you have mumps

If you have mumps you do not have to stay at home in isolation, however you should not go to school, early learning services, university or work until five days after your swelling first appeared.

You should only visit a healthcare setting if you need medical attention, and you should ring ahead before going and wear a mask while you are there.

You also should avoid attending sporting or cultural events and places of worship, or places where there may be others present who are not immune against mumps (for example places where there may be babies under 12 months old).

You will be told by public health staff when it is safe to resume your normal day to day activities.

Treatment and recovery

Most people recover from mumps two weeks after getting symptoms.

There is no specific medical treatment or cure for mumps, however you can receive treatment to ease your symptoms and reduce the risk of complications.

To ease your symptoms while at home:

- get plenty of bed rest
- drink plenty of fluids
- take paracetamol if needed to reduce pain and fever
- place something cold against swollen glands if they are painful

Check if you're immune

You are considered protected (immune) against mumps if you:

- were born before 1 Jan 1982 (as it is likely you had mumps as a child).
- have had mumps before.
- have had two doses of the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine at 12 months of age or older (or 1 dose if between the ages 12 – 15 months).
- have had a blood test which shows you are immune.

If you've had contact with someone with mumps

If you have been in contact with someone with mumps (from 12 days after the first day of contact until 25 days after the last day of contact) you need to do the following:

If you are immune:

- continue with your usual day to day activities, as long as you remain symptom free.

If you are not immune (or if you do not know if you are immune):

- stay away from school, early learning services, university or work.
- stay away from health care settings.
- stay away from people who may be immunocompromised or not immune (i.e. under one year old).

You will be told by public health staff if you need to stay away from school,

work or other settings and for how long.

When you are allowed to return to your usual day to day activities, go and get vaccinated with the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine (more information on how to get the vaccine in the Prevention section).

People who have been in contact with someone with mumps may be asked to provide proof of immunity. You can contact your doctor to check if you are immune, or check your Plunket or Well Child Tamariki Ora book.

Complications

In rare cases, mumps may lead to more serious complications including:

- inflammation of your brain (called encephalitis)
- inflammation of the lining of your brain and spinal cord (called meningitis)
- hearing loss (in most cases this is temporary and will pass, but in some cases it can be permanent)
- swollen testicles or scrotum (this affects one in five adult males with mumps and in rare cases can cause infertility)
- swollen ovaries (which causes a more severe tummy pain)
- swollen breasts

People at higher risk of serious illness

Some people are more at risk of serious illness or health complications if they get mumps. This includes:

- anyone with a chronic illness or a weakened immune system

- children who are too young to receive the first dose of the MMR vaccine
- pregnant women who have not been immunised against mumps

If you or your family are in one of these groups, it's important you get vaccinated if you can.

Prevention

The best protection against mumps is to be vaccinated with two doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

The vaccine is free for all children in NZ and all adults over the age of 18 eligible for free NZ healthcare. You can check if you had the vaccine before by contacting your doctor or practice nurse.

MMR vaccination can be booked:

- online through Book My Vaccine
- over the phone by calling 0800 28 2926. This is available from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

It's never too late to catch up if you or your whānau missed out on the vaccine.

For more information

For more information about mumps, visit www.arphs.nz/mumps

You can also call Healthline for free anytime on 0800 611 116 anytime. Interpreters are available for those who need one.