



Weill Cornell Medical College

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Patient Education:

Mumps, Pediatric

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Mumps, Pediatric

Mumps is an illness that is caused by a virus. The illness often causes flulike symptoms and swelling of the salivary glands that lie between the ear and the jaw (*parotid glands*). The virus can spread from person to person (*contagious*). It is most common in children who are 5–15 years old.

Mumps is usually a mild illness. Most often, children get better in about 10 days. Having your child vaccinated is the best way to prevent mumps. Children usually get mumps only if they have not received the vaccine.

CAUSES

This condition is caused by a virus that can be passed through direct contact with an infected person. It may also be passed in tiny droplets that the infected person coughs or sneezes into the air. Another person can get the virus by breathing in those droplets. A person can also get the virus by touching something that was recently contaminated with the virus, then touching his or her mouth, nose, or eyes.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of this condition usually develop 2–3 weeks after a person is exposed to the virus. Symptoms include:

- Painful swelling of the parotid glands, on both sides of the jaw. The swelling usually occurs over several days and often begins on one side. The swelling goes away in about 1 week.
- Muscular aches and pains.
- Fever.
- Headache.
- Nausea and occasional vomiting.
- Abdominal pain.
- Loss of appetite.
- General tiredness (*malaise*).

Mumps can sometimes lead to other problems, such as swelling of the testicles in boys who have gone through puberty.

DIAGNOSIS

This condition may be diagnosed based on a physical exam and medical history. Your child may also have tests, including blood tests or tests that are done from a throat swab.

TREATMENT

There is no cure for the mumps virus, so treatment is directed at relieving symptoms. Your child's health care provider may prescribe or recommend medicines to help reduce pain or fever. The illness will probably go away on its own in about 10 days.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Eating and Drinking

- Have your child eat soft foods to help reduce jaw pain.
- Avoid giving your child food and fluids that are acidic. Those will upset the stomach and worsen mouth pain by stimulating the parotid glands. Examples include:
 - Orange juice.
 - Tomatoes.
 - Products that contain vinegar.
- Have your child drink enough fluid to keep his or her urine clear or pale yellow.

Activities

- Have your child rest until he or she feels better.
- Keep your child home from school or daycare for at least 5 days after the swelling of the glands began or as directed by your child's health care provider.

General Instructions

- Give medicines only as directed by your child's health care provider. **Do not** give your child aspirin because of the association with Reye syndrome.
- Apply ice to the jaw area to help reduce pain and swelling.
 - Put ice in a plastic bag.
 - Place a towel between your child's skin and the bag.
 - Leave the ice on for 20 minutes, 2–3 times per day.
- If directed by your child's health care provider, apply warm compresses to help with pain.
- Take steps to prevent spreading the infection.
 - Wash your hands and your child's hands often.
 - Have your child stay away from other people as much as possible until he or she is better. Make sure that your child stays away from pregnant women and people who have not had their full course of vaccines.

PREVENTION

Mumps can be prevented with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has a hard time swallowing or opening his or her mouth.
- Your child has weakness.
- Your child has pain or swelling in the testicles.
- Your child keeps vomiting.
- Your child has abdominal pain.
- Your child has ringing in the ears or problems with hearing.
- Your child has a fever.
- Your child's symptoms do not improve within 7 days.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has a seizure.
- Your child becomes confused.
- Your child is very sleepy or is hard to wake up.
- Your child has severe neck pain or a stiff neck.
- Your child has a severe headache.
- Your child who is younger than 3 months has a temperature of 100°F (38°C) or higher.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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