

Mumps FAQs



What is mumps? Mumps is an infection caused by a virus. It causes swelling of the salivary glands in front of the ears and above the jaw as seen in the photo. These are called *parotid glands*.

How does mumps spread? Mumps virus spreads from person to person via droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat of an infected person, usually when the person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The virus may also be spread indirectly when someone with mumps touches items or surfaces without washing their hands and then someone else touches the same surface and rubs their mouth or nose. After you catch the infection, symptoms start in 12 to 25 days. People with mumps are infectious from two days before symptoms begin until five days after the start of parotid gland swelling.

What are the symptoms of mumps? Some people have no symptoms. But in most people, the early symptoms include fever, feeling tired and achy, headache, poor appetite. About 2 days after the early symptoms start, the parotid glands become swollen. Most people recover without problems.

What if I think I may have mumps? If you think you have mumps, even if you have been previously vaccinated, CALL your healthcare provider or Student Health Services at 619-594-4325 and press “2” to speak with a nurse. **If you are diagnosed with mumps**, you should stay at home until you are no longer infectious, 5 days after the start of your salivary gland swelling.

Can there be complications from a mumps infection? Yes. Orchitis, very painful and swollen testicles, is the most common complication in post-pubertal males. Infection of the nervous system (e.g. meningitis, hearing loss) is possible. Less common complications can involve other organs such as the pancreas, heart, kidneys and ovaries or your joints. In extreme cases, fetal loss can occur during first trimester of pregnancy.

How do I protect myself from getting mumps? The best way to protect yourself is by being vaccinated. It is important to get two doses of the vaccine. One dose is 78% effective and two doses is 88% effective. A third or booster dose appears to be even more effective in reducing the spread of mumps. If you have not received three doses, we recommend you see your family healthcare provider or come to Student Health Services walk-in clinics on Wednesday, November 9 and Thursday, November 10 between 9 am and 3 pm. There is NO COST for the vaccine at Student Health Services during these clinics.

Who should not be immunized? Any of these might be a reason to not get the vaccine, or delay vaccination until later.

- Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to the antibiotic neomycin, or any other component of MMR vaccine, should not get the vaccine.
- Anyone who had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of MMR or MMRV vaccine should not get another dose.
- Some people who are sick at the time the shot is scheduled may be advised to wait until they recover before getting MMR vaccine.
- Pregnant women should not get MMR vaccine. Pregnant women who need the vaccine should wait until after giving birth. Women should avoid getting pregnant for 4 weeks after vaccination with MMR vaccine.

Tell your doctor if you:

- Have HIV/AIDS, or another disease that affects the immune system
- Are being treated with drugs that affect the immune system, such as steroids
- Have any kind of cancer
- Are being treated for cancer with radiation or drugs
- Have ever had a low platelet count (a blood disorder)
- Have gotten another vaccine within the past 4 weeks
- Have recently had a transfusion or received other blood products

For more information about mumps, see the [CDC](#).