



MUMPS

Mumps is not a very common childhood infection but there are still occasional outbreaks in South Africa. Mumps is caused by a virus that is contagious like the flu. Complications from mumps infection are rare but if it is not monitored carefully, they can be serious and even life threatening.

Mumps is a contagious viral infection that causes painful enlargement of the salivary glands, especially the parotid gland which produces saliva and is located at the back of the jaw, just in front of the ears. This is what causes the typical puffy cheeks and a tender, swollen jaw that patients present with. Infection may also affect the testes, brain, and pancreas, especially in adults.



How is mumps spread?

Mumps spreads from person to person via droplets of saliva or mucus of an infected person. 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.

Who is at risk for mumps?

Mumps is generally a mild childhood disease, most often affecting children between five and nine years old. However, the mumps virus can infect adults. People who have had mumps are usually protected for life against another mumps infection but second occurrences of mumps do rarely occur.

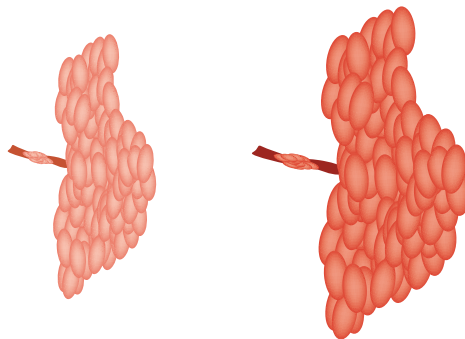


What are the symptoms of mumps?

The most common symptom of mumps is parotitis – inflammation of the parotid gland which becomes swollen and painful. Symptoms of mumps show up about 2 to 3 weeks after exposure to the virus. Some people may have no symptoms or very mild symptoms. A person with mumps may also experience pain when chewing or swallowing and is reluctant to eat for this reason. Other symptoms may be vague and is often associated with infections like a fever, weakness, and tiredness (fatigue).

Most children recover with no problems, but infection can lead to meningitis or encephalitis.

Inflammation of the Parotid Gland



Normal

Parotitis

How can I prevent mumps?

Safe and effective vaccines against mumps have been available since the 1960s. The 'measles, mumps and rubella' (MMR) vaccine is a combination of live attenuated (weakened) measles, mumps and rubella viruses. The vaccine is administered as an injection under the skin or into the muscle of the arm to children aged 12 months. A booster MMR vaccine is also advised for children aged 6 years. Platinum Health members can take their children to get the MMR vaccine at any PH medical facility (applicable to PlatComprehensive and PlatCap members). PlatFreedom members can visit any Clinic which offers child immunisations.



What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no specific treatment for mumps and it should be allowed to run its course. Paracetamol or ibuprofen can be used for the pain and fever but aspirin should be avoided as its use may be linked to Reye's syndrome. Bed rest, a healthy diet and plenty of fluids will help your body overcome the infection, which usually lasts for 2 weeks.



For more information, talk to a Platinum Health Healthcare Provider.



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Source: www.vitacare.co.za, www.nicd.ac.za