

Facts About Mumps for Adults

What is mumps?

Mumps is an acute viral disease that is spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. People who have mumps may spread the infection to others, even when they do not have any symptoms or their illness is mild.

Prevention

There is a vaccine to protect against mumps. The vaccine is given to adults as part of a combination vaccine, called the MMR vaccine, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella. There is also a vaccine that protects only against mumps.

Symptoms

The symptoms of mumps include a low grade fever and swelling or tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands in the cheeks and under the jaw. In postpubertal males, up to 30% may also experience testicular pain and swelling.

Symptoms usually appear between 12 and 25 days after a person has been exposed to the virus. However, as many as 30-40% of the cases may be asymptomatic and nearly 50% are associated with non-specific or primarily respiratory symptoms, with or without parotitis

Who should get MMR vaccine?

- ◆ Adults born in 1957 or later including non-pregnant women of childbearing age who do not have a medical contraindication should receive at least one dose of the MMR vaccine, unless they have documentation of vaccination with at least one dose of MMR vaccine or other acceptable evidence of immunity to these three diseases.
- ◆ College and university students, health care personnel, child care workers such as teachers and day care personnel, and international travelers are at increased risk for mumps. These persons should receive two doses of the MMR vaccine or have other acceptable evidence of immunity, in order to ensure adequate protection.

Vaccine Safety

The mumps vaccine and the combined MMR vaccine are safe and highly effective in preventing mumps. Occasionally, adults who get the mumps vaccine will develop a low-grade fever or swelling of the salivary glands in the cheeks and neck. Other adverse events that are associated with the measles and/or rubella component of MMR, including fever, rash and joint symptoms in adult women, may also infrequently occur. As with any medicine, there are very small risks that serious problems could occur after getting the vaccine. However, the potential risks associated with mumps disease are much greater than the potential risks associated with the mumps vaccine.

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- FACT:** Mumps can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine.
- FACT:** Mumps is the most contagious from 3 days before to 5 days after the onset of parotitis.
- FACT:** Approximately two-fifth of infected people do not have symptoms of mumps.
- FACT:** Serious complications of mumps are more common among adults than among children.
- FACT:** About 2-3 out of every 10 adolescent or adult men who have mumps may experience painful swelling of the testicles. Sterility rarely occurs.
- FACT:** Rare complications caused by mumps include infection of the brain (encephalitis) and inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis). Other rare complications include arthritis, kidney and pancreas problems, deafness, and inflammation of the ovaries.
- FACT:** In 2006, a multistate outbreak of mumps occurred in the United States that affected more than 6,000 people. The majority of the cases occurred among collage age persons, but adolescents and adults were also affected.
- FACT:** In 2008, of the 386 reported cases of mumps, 54% were between 15 and 59 years old.