

**Environmental Health & Prevention Services**

# Mumps

**What is mumps?**

Mumps is caused by a virus. It can be prevented by vaccination. Before the mumps vaccine, mumps was a very common illness for infants, children and young adults. However, because most people in Ontario have been vaccinated, very few cases are reported.

**What are the symptoms?**

Symptoms of mumps may appear within 12 to 25 days after exposure to the virus and may include:

- Painful swelling of the glands at the jaw line (salivary glands - may be one or both)
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pains
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Respiratory symptoms similar to a cold may also occur.

Mumps can be accompanied by no symptoms. Adults who get the mumps are more likely to have serious problems than children.

If you had mumps as a child you are likely immune. A very small number could get re-infected with mumps.

**How is it spread?**

Mumps is spread person-to-person through close or direct contact with saliva or respiratory secretions (coughing, sneezing, kissing, sharing drinks and utensils, cigarettes). Mumps virus may spread up to 7 days before the glands begin to swell and for up to 9 days after. It takes about 2-3 weeks to get the mumps after being in contact with someone with the disease.

**What can I do?**

- Contact a doctor if you have signs and symptoms of mumps.
- Make sure MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella) records are up-to-date.
- Keep the person with mumps away from childcare, school, work or public places for at least 10 days after the symptoms appear.
- Avoid contact with infants (children less than one year of age) or others who are not immune to mumps through vaccination or past infection, especially pregnant women and individuals with a weakened immune system.
- Wash your hands well and often with soap. It can help prevent the spread of mumps and other infections.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils. Objects and surfaces that are regularly touched (toys, counters, doorknobs, phones, etc) should be cleaned with soap and water or other cleaning agents.

**Treatment**

There is no treatment for mumps. The use of Acetaminophen (e.g. Tempra® or Tylenol®) as well as hot or cold compresses may relieve the pain in the gland area.

**When can I return to childcare, school or work?**

You can return in 9 days after onset of swelling.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT****Environmental Health & Prevention Services**

160 Exmouth Street  
Point Edward, Ontario N7T 7Z6  
Telephone: 519 383-8331  
Toll free: 1-800-667-1839  
Fax: 519 383-7092  
[www.lambtonhealth.on.ca](http://www.lambtonhealth.on.ca)

Revised 04.2010