

UNIVERSITY STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES • Fact Sheet

MUMPS**WHAT IS IT?**

Mumps is a highly contagious illness caused by the mumps virus. Since implementation of the mumps vaccination program in 1967, mumps cases have dropped more than 99% in the US. Mumps has also changed from being primarily a childhood illness to one that is now most common in college-aged young adults. Outbreaks tend to occur where people live or work in close contact, such as on college campuses.

Unvaccinated individuals are at high risk for mumps infection. Even though immunity may wane over time in some vaccinated individuals, the mumps vaccine still provides protection. If a vaccinated individual gets mumps, they usually have milder symptoms and fewer complications.

HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

The mumps virus is spread through saliva or respiratory droplets from the mouth/nose/throat of an infected person. This most commonly occurs by breathing in respiratory droplets coughed or sneezed into the air. Transmission can also occur through direct contact with saliva (such as from kissing or sharing beverages/eating utensils/lip balm) or contaminated surfaces.

- An infected person is considered contagious beginning 2 days before until 5 days after the development of swollen parotid glands.
- The incubation period for mumps (how long symptoms take to develop after exposure) is 12-25 days.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Patients will typically experience flu-like symptoms first, followed within 48 hours by the classic presentation of parotid gland swelling. The parotid glands are salivary glands located in front of the ears and above the jaw.

- Flu-like symptoms often include fever (usually low-grade), headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and loss of appetite.
- Inflammation of the parotid gland causes pain and swelling in the jaw and/or cheek area. Swelling may occur on one or both sides of the face. If both sides are affected, swelling usually occurs on one side first, followed by the other side a few days later. Parotid gland swelling typically lasts 7 to 10 days.

Symptoms usually resolve on their own within 2 weeks. Very rarely, mumps can lead to complications, such as inflammation of the testicles (orchitis), ovaries (oophoritis), or lining of the brain & spinal cord (meningitis).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM FEELING ILL?

Isolate yourself, and call Student Health Services to schedule a same-day appointment (804-828-8828 at Monroe Park & 804-828-9220 at MCV).

- To decrease the risk of infecting others, special arrangements will be made for you to enter the clinic through a different entrance.
- Wear a mask to clinic and anytime you will be around others.
- It is important to be evaluated so that our providers can test you for the mumps virus and discuss ways to decrease symptoms and avoid spreading the infection to others.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Mumps should be suspected in patients presenting with typical symptoms, such as swollen parotid glands. To confirm the diagnosis, swabs of the inside of your cheeks will be taken to look for the mumps virus. Bloodwork for mumps antibodies will also be completed. In previously vaccinated individuals, labs may be falsely negative, and your provider may reasonably rely on history and physical exam findings to make the diagnosis.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

Mumps is typically a self-limited illness. Supportive care measures are used to provide symptom relief while the virus runs its course:

- Rest as much as possible throughout the isolation period.
- Drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids, like water, tea, and sports drinks. Avoid acidic juices.
- Take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) to treat fever and/or pain.
 - Take ibuprofen with food to avoid an upset stomach.
 - Children and teenagers should avoid the use of aspirin due to the risk of developing a dangerous condition known as Reye syndrome.
- Warm or cool packs may provide relief from jaw symptoms.

If you develop worsening symptoms or have signs of complications, call our **Nurse Line at 804-827-8023** during regular business hours or our **after-hours number at 804-828-8828**. Signs of mumps complications may include:

- Testicular pain and swelling (concerning for orchitis).
- Lower abdominal pain, fever, and vomiting in females (concerning for inflammation of the ovaries or oophoritis).
- Headache, fever, and neck stiffness (concerning for meningitis).

WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP OTHERS FROM GETTING SICK?

Mumps is an illness that can spread easily and pose a public health concern. If you are diagnosed with mumps, it is very important to:

- Isolate yourself at home (in your own sick room if possible) to decrease transmission to others. This means avoiding public areas, classes, work, parties, and other activities for at least 5 days after the onset of swollen parotid glands.
- If you have a VCU meal plan, a friend can use your student ID to purchase meals for you.
- Wear a mask if you will be in a common area of your living space or around others. Place the mask in a bag before disposing of it, and wash your hands well afterwards.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette by covering your mouth and nose if you cough or sneeze (use your elbow if a tissue is not available), properly disposing of tissues, and washing your hands often. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not share drinks or eating utensils with others.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces (tables, doorknobs, countertops, phones, etc).

WHAT SHOULD CLOSE CONTACTS DO?

Close contacts are people who were within 3 feet of you during your infectious period (beginning 2 days before until 5 days after the onset of parotid gland swelling).

- Close contacts should monitor for infection from 12-25 days after exposure. If signs and symptoms develop, they should isolate, mask, and notify a medical provider.
- Healthcare students or workers without evidence of immunity are excluded from all patient contact from 12-25 days after exposure to mumps.
- Close contacts who are not immune to mumps should complete mumps vaccination.
- If an outbreak of mumps is identified in the community, a 3rd dose of vaccine may be recommended in fully vaccinated individuals.

HOW DO I MINIMIZE MY CHANCES OF GETTING MUMPS?

- The mumps vaccine is the most effective way to prevent infection. You are fully vaccinated if you received 2 doses of the mumps vaccine after your first birthday, at least 28 days apart. Your chance of getting mumps drops to 10% after completing vaccination.
- Continue good hygiene practices, reviewed above (follow respiratory etiquette, wash your hands well and often, do not share food/drinks, clean frequently touched surfaces). Also avoid touching your nose/mouth after touching surfaces.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES: www.cdc.gov, www.vdh.virginia.gov, www.mayoclinic.org