

Mumps – Frequently Asked Questions

Is mumps a serious disease?

- Mumps can be serious, but most people fully recover in a few weeks.
- About 3 in 10 men and adolescent boys can develop pain or swelling in their testicles, which rarely results in sterility.
- About 1 in 20 females (after puberty) develop swollen ovaries, and infertility from mumps is very rare.
- Inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) and loss of hearing can also occur, and in rare cases, hearing loss can be permanent (less than 5 in 100,000 cases).
- The most serious but rare complication is inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), which can lead to death or permanent disability.

I got the mumps vaccine but still got mumps. Does this mean the vaccine didn't work?

- Mumps-containing vaccines prevent most, but not all, cases of mumps and the complications it causes.
- People who received 2 doses of a mumps vaccine are about 9 times less likely to get mumps than unvaccinated people who have the same exposure to mumps virus. However, some people who receive the recommended 2 doses of a mumps vaccine can still get mumps, especially if they have prolonged, close contact with someone who has mumps. If a vaccinated person gets mumps, they may have less severe mumps than an unvaccinated person.
- Mumps was a common childhood illness before vaccine became available in the 1970's. People born before 1970 are assumed to be immune from natural infection.

I've been told that I need to stay away from people while I'm sick with mumps. Why?

- People infected with mumps can spread the virus to others from 7 days before they have developed any symptoms to 5 days after they have developed swollen salivary glands.
- People with mumps, should avoid prolonged, close contact with other people until at least five days after the salivary glands begin to swell because they are contagious during this time.
- Stay home and limit contact with the people you live with; sleep alone in a separate room if you can.

Staying home while sick with mumps is an important way to avoid spreading the virus to other people.

What else should I do to prevent mumps from spreading?

- Mumps spreads more easily in crowded environments and where close contact with others commonly occurs such as classrooms, sporting events, bars, and dormitory living.
- In addition to staying away from others when you have mumps, you can help prevent the virus from spreading by:
 - covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands;
 - washing your hands often with soap and water;
 - avoiding kissing or sharing personal items such as eating utensils, water bottles, drinks, lipsticks and cigarettes; and
 - disinfecting surfaces such as toys, doorknobs, counters etc.

What should I do during a mumps outbreak?

- Make sure your immunizations are up-to-date. The single most important way to prevent mumps is to be immunized with 2 doses of a mumps-containing vaccine i.e. measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine or measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccine.
- Practice good hygiene. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Disinfect surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, counters etc, which can become contaminated. In addition, avoid kissing or sharing personal items such as eating utensils, water bottles, drinks, lipsticks and cigarettes.
- If you think you have been exposed to mumps, watch for symptoms and practice the above prevention measures. Contact your healthcare provider if you or a family member becomes ill. Call ahead so they can prepare to see you or your family members without exposing others.
- People who are exposed to mumps don't get sick right away—it can take 2 to 4 weeks for them to show signs of infection.
- Up to 30% of people infected with mumps have no symptoms but can unfortunately still spread the virus to others.

I have questions about the mumps vaccine. Where can I get more information?

- Information about the mumps vaccines is available at:
<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/accessing-health-care-services/immunization-services#immunization-forms-and-fact-sheets>:
 - Measles Mumps Rubella
 - Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella

Why am I assumed to be immune if I was born before 1970?

- Mumps was a common childhood illness before the vaccine was introduced in Saskatchewan in 1979.
- Individuals born before 1970 are likely to have been exposed to mumps in childhood, and are considered to have natural immunity to it.

Do my childhood measles mumps and rubella vaccinations protect me?

- Individuals born in 1970 or later are considered to be immune if they have received 2 doses of a mumps-containing vaccine as long as the following criteria are met:
 - the 1st dose was provided after the individual's 1st birthday; and
 - the 2nd dose was provided at least 4 weeks after the first dose.
- If the above criteria have been met, no further vaccinations are required for individuals born in 1970 or later.

I am pregnant. Can mumps put my unborn baby at risk?

- Yes, your unborn baby could be at risk if you are not immune to mumps. Mumps during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, premature birth, and low birth weight. Birth defects are rare, but possible.
- If you are immune to mumps, either through having had mumps or from vaccination, you will pass on short term mumps protection to your baby. This protection will disappear after the first few months of your baby's life and your baby will still need to have the mumps vaccine at 1 year old..

My child is younger than 1 year of age. Should my child get the mumps vaccine now?

- No. Wait until your child is 1 year old to get their 1st mumps vaccine as per the routine provincial immunization schedule. Mumps is spread through direct contact with respiratory secretions of individuals with mumps. Keep your child away from individuals who are ill or known to have mumps and practice good hand hygiene with your child.

My child is younger than 1 year of age and we are planning to travel outside of the province where there are mumps outbreaks happening. Should my child get the mumps vaccine now?

- No. Wait until your child is 1 year old to get their 1st mumps vaccine as per the routine provincial immunization schedule. Mumps is spread through direct contact with respiratory secretions of individuals with mumps. Keep your child away from individuals who are ill or known to have mumps and practice good hand hygiene with your child.

In what circumstances would I need to isolate myself at home?

- Individuals should self-isolate themselves at home, not be out in public, and not go to school, day care, or work if they suspect they have become ill with mumps. All persons with mumps are infectious for 7 days prior to onset of illness and for 5 days after swollen salivary glands appear along the jawline.

In what circumstances would my child be excluded from school or daycare?

- When a child is excluded from school or daycare, they are also required to self-isolate at home and not be out in public.
- A child under investigation for mumps will be excluded from school or daycare by their physician or the Public Health Office until five days after swollen salivary glands appear.

How can I get a copy of my child's immunization records?

- Contact your Public Health Office.

How can I get a copy of my own immunization record?

- Contact your Public Health Office. If your immunization record is not complete or unavailable, the Public Health Office will provide you with recommendations on getting your immunizations up-to-date.