



KENT HEALTH PROTECTION UNIT

Mumps General Information Leaflet

What is mumps?

Mumps is an infectious disease caused by the mumps virus. It is a mild disease in most people causing very little upset and may even go completely unnoticed. In others, however, it can have some quite severe complications. These include swelling of the testes (orchitis), swelling of the ovaries (oophoritis), pancreatitis, meningitis, encephalitis and deafness.

How does it spread?

Humans are the only known host of the mumps virus. Mumps is usually spread from person to person by coughs and sneezes. Occasionally, it may be spread by direct contact with the saliva of someone with mumps. People with the illness can pass it to others several days before the symptoms start until just after the swelling has settled.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms begin with a headache and fever for a day or two, followed by swelling of the parotid glands, in front of the ears on one or both sides. In some cases, the salivary glands do not swell, but the patient develops symptoms elsewhere (eg. orchitis, meningitis).

How can it be treated?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Treatment is based on alleviating symptoms.

What is the incubation period?

The incubation period is usually 12 to 25 days

How can it be prevented?

The only effective way to prevent mumps is by immunisation. Mumps vaccine is one of the components of MMR vaccine since 1988, given to children as part of the routine programme of immunisation, offered to all children at 12-15 months, with a second dose offered preschool between 3-5 years of age.

To reduce spread, cases are advised to stay at home for nine days after the swollen glands appear.

Further information?

For more information on mumps, you can visit the Health Protection Agency website http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/mumps/menu.htm . If you are concerned about mumps, you may phone NHS Direct on 0845 46 47, or visit the NHS Direct website on <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

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