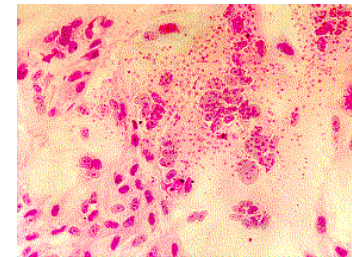




Public Health  
England

## Information Leaflet on *Mumps*



Further information can be obtained from  
West Midlands Public Health England team  
Tel:0344 225 3560  
Option 2

Updated December 2016

## **What is it?**

Mumps is a highly contagious viral infection that usually affects children.

## **How do I know someone has it?**

A person will have fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more salivary glands in the neck and possibly mouth and throat. This can occur in one or both sides of the neck.

## **Is it infectious?**

Yes mumps is infectious for 6 days before and up to 9 days after the swelling first appears. The mumps virus is spread in the same way as the common cold and flu viruses. The mumps virus is airborne, which means that it can survive briefly in the outside environment. Therefore, mumps can be spread through:

- **direct contact** – for example, if you sneeze or cough, tiny droplets of fluid containing the mumps virus are launched into the air and can be breathed by others
- **indirect contact** – for example, if infected droplets are transferred to an object, such as a door handle, and someone else touches it, they may catch the mumps if they then touch their mouth or nose.

## **What is the incubation period?**

This is normally 18 days but can be 12 - 25 days.

## **Is there any treatment?**

There is no specific treatment. MMR vaccine is routinely offered to children in the second year of life, and as part of the pre-school booster. Once a person has had mumps, they usually develop immunity against further infections.

## **What should I do if someone has the illness?**

If unsure about the diagnosis, consult a doctor.

Keep a child or adult cool by reducing the amount of bedding or clothing and by giving paracetamol as prescribed on the bottle.

The infected person should rest while they have a fever.

Ensure the infected person covers their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

Make sure that handkerchiefs and flannels are washed well in a washing machine or hot soapy water. Always wash your hands well afterwards.

A person finding it sore to swallow will find thick and smooth drinks (e.g. soups, milkshakes) easier to tolerate.

## **How soon can someone return to nursery/school/university/work?**

The person should stay away until 5 days from onset of swollen glands.