

* Please Read *

Infectious Disease.

Mumps

Description

Mumps is an infection caused by a virus that is now uncommon in Australia due to immunisation. About one-third of people with mumps will have only mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.³⁸ When symptoms do occur, they include swelling of the salivary glands, high fever and headache; males may have tender testicles, and females may have pain in the lower abdomen.

Serious complications can occur, including inflammation of the spinal cord and brain, hearing loss, sterility (very rare) or death (extremely rare).

How does it spread?

The mumps virus spreads by direct contact with droplets from the sneeze or cough of an infected person.

Incubation period

The incubation period can be 12 to 25 days; it is usually 16–18 days.

Infectious period

The infectious period begins up to 6 days before the glands begin to swell, and for up to 9 days after swelling begins.

Exclusion period

People with mumps should be excluded for 9 days after the onset of swelling, or until the swelling goes down, whichever is soonest.

Responsibilities of educators and other staff

- Advise the parent to keep the child home until they are feeling well—this must be at least until the swelling goes down or 9 days after the onset of swelling.
- Make sure staff and children practise cough and sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene.
- Ensure that appropriate cleaning practices are being followed in the education and care service.

Responsibilities of parents

- Make sure children are vaccinated against mumps.
- Keep the child at home until they are feeling well—this must be at least until the swelling goes down or 9 days after the onset of swelling.
- Encourage cough and sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene at home.

Controlling the spread of infection

- Mumps can be prevented by immunisation. Fully immunised communities offer the best protection against mumps. Children should be immunised against mumps at 12 months of age and again at 4 years with the measles–mumps–rubella (MMR) vaccine. The vaccine provides long-term immunity; having the illness itself provides lifelong immunity.

- Teach children about cough and sneeze etiquette.
 - Cough or sneeze into your inner elbow rather than your hand.
 - If you used a tissue to cover your nose or mouth when sneezing or coughing, put the tissue in the bin straight away.
 - Clean your hands.
- Ensure that staff practise cough and sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene.
- Ensure that appropriate cleaning practices are being followed.

Treatment

There is no treatment for mumps, but it is a vaccine-preventable disease. Children are vaccinated against mumps under the National Immunisation Program.

15 March 2019

NSW Health warns of a rise in gastroenteritis among children

NSW Health is alerting parents and carers with young children about the need to carefully wash their hands and keep sick children at home amid a rise in viral gastroenteritis cases.

The warning has been prompted by gastroenteritis outbreaks at childcare centres across NSW and a high number of children aged under 5 seeking treatment for the highly-contagious infection.

The number of outbreaks at childcare centres reported to NSW Health is above average for this time of year, with 109 centres reporting that almost 1,000 children have been affected since February. More than 200 staff have also reportedly fallen ill during these outbreaks.

The number of children seeking treatment for gastroenteritis at Emergency Departments has also risen above usual levels, with 559 children seeking medical attention in the past week.

Ms Keira Glasgow, acting Manager of Enteric and Zoonotic Diseases at NSW Health, said gastroenteritis was often spread by direct contact with an infected person. Viral gastroenteritis is usually caused by norovirus or rotavirus.

"It spreads easily between people if they haven't carefully washed their hands after using the toilet or before handling food," Ms Glasgow said.

"The best defence is to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 10 seconds before handling and eating food, and always wash your hands after using the toilet, changing nappies or assisting someone who has diarrhoea or vomiting."

Symptoms of gastroenteritis include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, abdominal pain, headache and muscle aches. They can take up to three days to develop and usually last between one or two days, sometimes longer.

The main treatment for viral gastroenteritis is rest and drinking plenty of fluids. Most people recover without complications. However, viral gastroenteritis can be serious for infants, people with suppressed immune systems and the elderly.

"Infants or children in childcare or school who develop vomiting or diarrhoea, should stay home for at least 48 hours after their symptoms have stopped," Ms Glasgow said.

People whose work involves handling food, or looking after children, the elderly or patients, should not return to work until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped to avoid spread of infection to others.

People who are not in school or childcare, do not prepare food for others or do not look after children or the elderly should stay home for at least 24 hours after symptoms cease.

Anyone recovering from gastroenteritis should avoid visiting hospitals and aged care facilities to avoid spreading the infection to those most vulnerable.

For more information visit:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/gastroenteritis/Pages/default.aspx