

Mumps

An illness requiring droplet precautions

This handout describes mumps and its symptoms. It also explains how this disease is spread and tells how to keep it from spreading to others.

What is mumps?

Mumps is a disease that is caused by a virus. The virus infects the *salivary glands* (glands in the mouth that create saliva). There are 3 sets of salivary glands on each side of your face, behind and below your ears.

There is a mumps vaccine that can prevent this illness. It is part of the measles, mumps, rubella [MMR] vaccine.

What are symptoms?

Mumps symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Swelling around the jaw

People who get the mumps can also get *inflammation* (redness and swelling) in other places. This may occur in the membrane around the brain and spinal cord (*meningitis*), in the testicles or ovaries, or in the pancreas. Some people can even lose their hearing (become deaf).

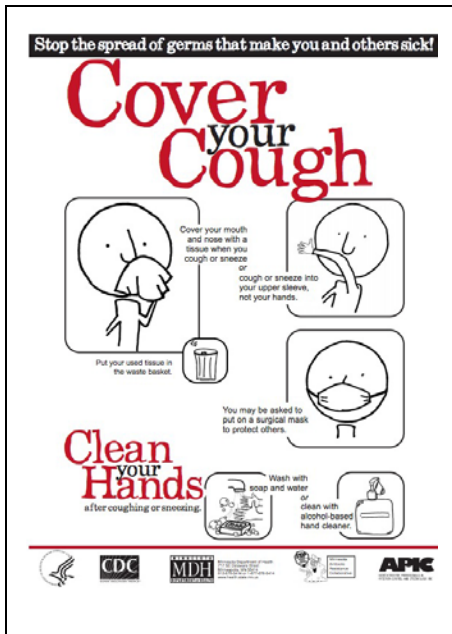


Mumps can be spread by sneezing, coughing, or talking.

All cases of the mumps are reported to the health department. This is done so that we can follow up with other people who may have come in contact with you. These people are at risk of becoming ill and may need care.

How is mumps spread?

The mumps is spread when a person who has the virus coughs, sneezes, or talks, and spreads tiny droplets in the air. This is why people who have the mumps are kept in *droplet precautions* (see page 2). If someone touches something with the mumps virus on it and then touches their mouth or nose, they can also “catch” the disease.



Mumps is very contagious. Someone can spread the disease from about 3 days before symptoms appear to about 4 days afterward. But, the virus has been found in a person's saliva as early as 7 days before symptoms appear, and as late as 9 days after symptoms start.

This means that you can spread the mumps to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. **Tell your healthcare provider if you think you have the mumps or have been around someone with the mumps.**

People with mumps symptoms should:

- **Wear a mask**
- **Wash their hands often**
- **Place used tissues in wastebaskets when they come to the hospital or a clinic**

Pick up a free “Cover Your Cough” kit” at the Information Desk or your clinic.

How is mumps diagnosed?

Mumps is diagnosed by symptoms. We can verify that you have the disease by taking a swab of your saliva and testing it in the lab. Blood tests can also tell us if a person is immune to the disease, or if they are at risk for getting it.

How are others protected from the mumps?

At UW Medical Center, we place a “Droplet Precautions” sign near the door of your room. This sign tells healthcare staff and your visitors to observe these precautions when caring for you. If you are in droplet precautions:

- Hospital staff will wear masks, gowns, and gloves when providing care.
- Visitors who have not been vaccinated should not visit you.
- **We advise hand washing for 15 seconds, using alcohol hand gels, and environmental cleanliness.**
- We will ask you to stay in your room unless you need to go to other areas of the hospital for treatment. If you leave your room, we will ask you to wash your hands and wear a yellow gown, gloves, and a mask.
- Please do **not** use the nutrition rooms. When you want a snack or ice water, ask a member of your care team to bring it to you.

When can the precautions be stopped?

Droplet precautions for the mumps are usually stopped after 9 days, if you no longer have symptoms.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Infection Prevention:
206.598.6122