What is Mumps?

Mumps is an acute viral infection, most common in winter and spring. Initial symptoms of the mumps includes: fever, headache, tiredness, muscle aches and a loss of appetite. Pain and soreness in the jaw and neck area and swelling of the salivary glands in front of one or both ears then follows. In males, tenderness of the testicles may also occur.

Complications from the mumps are rare but include inflammation of the spinal cord / brain (meningitis or encephalitis), permanent hearing loss, inflammation of the testicles, which in rare cases may result in male sterility and spontaneous abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy. In extremely rare cases mumps can be fatal.

Mumps is diagnosed by a positive blood test for mumps antibodies or by isolating the virus from a blood test, a throat swab, urine or cerebrospinal fluid. Whenever a diagnosis of mumps is made, the Public Health Unit is contacted to trace family members, friends and any other people who may have been exposed to the mumps. There is no specific treatment for mumps.

People with mumps are infectious from up to 6 days before they experience any symptoms until about 9 days after the symptoms appear. People who have been infected with the mumps virus but who do not have any symptoms still go through an infectious period and are able to pass the virus on to others.

Mumps is a vaccine preventable disease and in Australia routine vaccination is recommended at 12 months of age and again at 18 months of age. Vaccination or infection with mumps is considered to provide long-term immunity to the mumps virus and it is unusual to have mumps more than once.

Who is at risk from Mumps infection?

Anyone who has not previously had mumps or been vaccinated against mumps is at risk of mumps infection.

How can Mumps be spread?

Mumps can be spread by direct contact with an infected person during an episode of coughing or sneezing. Or, by indirect contact with items or surfaces contaminated from the spraying of the droplets from coughing or sneezing, e.g. furniture, door handles, lift buttons. Once you touch the contaminated items, it is very easy to then touch your eyes, nose or mouth and infect yourself with the virus.

How will my care in hospital change?

* A sign is placed outside your door to alert hospital staff for the need to use special protective infection control precautions. This sign also alerts visitors of the need to speak with nursing staff prior to entering your room.
* You will be allocated a private room with your own en-suite facilities. To prevent further spread of the infection you are required to remain in your room during the infectious stage.
* If you are required to have medical tests elsewhere in the hospital you will be supplied with a special face mask to wear over your nose and mouth, at all times, when you are outside your room.

Good Hand Hygiene Practices

Hand Hygiene is the most effective way to prevent **ALL** infections, including the flu and the common cold. Encourage your family and friends to learn & maintain good hand hygiene practices every day.

Please refer to the hand hygiene information in the patient information booklet or hand hygiene leaflet available from the Infection prevention and control team.

During your stay in hospital you may have seen the staff using an alcohol-based hand rub, as an alternative to soap and water. This is available for purchase at most pharmacies. You may choose to purchase this for use at home.

Can I still have visitors?

Yes – But visitors who **SHOULD NOT** come to see you are those who HAVE NOT had or been immunised against mumps, especially children, newborn babies, anyone who may have a lowered immunity or is pregnant. If you are unsure about having contact with your family and friends during your infectious stage, please speak to your doctor or ask to speak with the Infection Control Nurse.

Whilst you are infectious, your visitors will be asked to wear a mask, goggles and gloves to protect them from infection; they may also be required to wear an apron / gown if they are assisting you with care. The nursing staff will direct your visitors in applying these items and in the correct disposal of them as well as educate them on the need to perform hand hygiene before entering your room and when they leave your room. We would appreciate it if you would also encourage your visitors to wear these items and perform this hand hygiene.

What happens when I go home?

* When you return home, it is important for you, your family and your friends to continue the good hand hygiene practices.
* Children with mumps should be kept home and excluded from school and childcare centres until they are no longer infectious. Notify the school or childcare centre that your child has mumps.
* Adults should stay home from work.
* All people with mumps should avoid mixing with other people until they are over their infectious stage.
* If you need to attend a hospital emergency department or your GP notify the receptionist of your infectious status on arrival, ask the receptionist to supply you with a face mask and sit away from other people.
* If any member of your household / or a carer is not immune to mumps or is pregnant they should consult their doctor prior to you being discharged from hospital.

Where can I get further information?

Talk to your doctor or the nurses caring for you. If you wish to speak with the Infection Control department, ask your nurse to contact us. Our office hours are 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Our contact numbers are:

* Office: (02) 9480 9433
* Office: (02) 9480 9732

References

NSW Dept of Health; Communicable Diseases Factsheets – Mumps (28 June 2018)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Infectious Diseases Factsheets – Mumps (March 8, 2021)

NSW Dept of Health; Infection Prevention and Control Policy PD2017\_013

National Health and Medical Research Council; Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019)

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). Australian Immunisation Handbook, Australian Government Department of Health, Canberra, 2018, [www.immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au](http://www.immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au)