Mumps

What is it?
• Mumps is a disease caused by a virus which is rare due to the introduction of the vaccine in 1975.
• Usually occurs in school-aged children, although it can occur at any age.

Signs and Symptoms?
• Mumps causes fever, aches and pains, headaches and swelling of the salivary glands around the jaw and cheeks.
• Swelling is painful and makes the cheeks puff out.
• The glands usually become more swollen and painful over 1 to 3 days.
• Chewing and swallowing can become painful.
• Some children infected with mumps have no symptoms at all, or may seem to have a cold, but can still spread the infection to others.
• In severe cases, mumps can cause meningitis, a serious disease that infects the fluid around the brain and spinal cord or encephalitis (swelling in the brain). This can lead to seizures, hearing loss, or death.
• Older boys and men sometimes get orchitis (painful swelling of the testicles), which can cause sterility (unable to get a woman pregnant).
• Women may have a painful infection of the ovaries, but it does not prevent pregnancy.

How is it spread?
• Mumps virus is spread through the air by coughing or sneezing or by droplet contact with the discharges from the nose and throat of an infected person.
• It can also be spread by direct contact with the saliva of an infected person.
• The virus is present in these discharges from 7 days before until 9 days after the onset of swelling of the glands.
• One person out of three who has mumps will not have any symptoms.

How to decrease the spread?
• Most people today are immune to mumps because they were vaccinated against the disease.
• Persons born before 1957 are considered immune due to previous infection.

Pregnancy and fetal development.
• If a pregnant woman is exposed to mumps she should consult her physician. Mumps infection in the first trimester (three months) of pregnancy can cause spontaneous miscarriage.

Recommended absence: All people with confirmed mumps are to be excluded from school or day care until nine days after the onset of swelling.

Mumps must be reported to the Medical Officer of Health as required by the Health Promotion and Protection Act.

Resources:
About Kids Health
www.aboutkidshealth.ca

Caring for Kids
www.caringforkids.cps.ca