



Mumps

What is it?

Mumps is a disease caused by a virus. It usually occurs in school-aged children, although it can occur at any age. Occurrence of mumps is now rare due to the introduction of mumps vaccine in 1975.

What does it look like?

Mumps causes fever and swollen salivary glands (below the ears). During adulthood, infection is likely to produce more severe disease. Adult men and teenage boys with mumps can develop orchitis (swollen, tender testicles). Other complications can occur but they are rare.

How is it spread?

The 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 seven days before until nine days after the onset of swelling of the glands. As many as one person out of three who has mumps will not have any symptoms.

Should I be concerned?

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.

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.

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

For more information, please contact a member of Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit's Infectious Disease Team.