

Mumps

Mumps is a viral disease that primarily causes inflammation of the salivary glands. It most commonly affects children aged 5–9 years, but can also occur in adults. The more severe form of the disease is more common in adults, while children tend to experience a milder form. In Slovenia, we began vaccinating against mumps in 1979. This has greatly reduced the incidence of the disease, with only a few isolated cases occurring in recent years.

Transmission

Mumps is transmitted through infectious droplets, saliva, or direct contact via the mucous membranes of the nose and mouth.

Symptoms and signs of the disease

Approximately one-third of people infected with the mumps virus do not experience any symptoms. If the disease develops, the most common symptoms are headache, elevated body temperature, and swollen parotid glands (on one or both sides). Pain when swallowing, fatigue, and swollen and tender testicles may also be present. Complications from mumps are rare but serious. Boys and men may develop inflammation of the testicles (orchitis), which manifests as severe pain and swelling in the testicular area. Inflammation of the testicles can also cause infertility (sterility). Inflammation of the brain, meninges, and hearing loss are other possible but rare complications of mumps.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for mumps; we can only alleviate the symptoms that occur (e.g., relieve pain with painkillers).

Prevention

Mumps is prevented by vaccination. Two doses of the vaccine are required for complete protection. Vaccination against mumps is included in the mandatory vaccination programme in Slovenia. The first dose is given to children between 12 and 18 months of age, and the second dose is given before they start school (between 5 and 6 years of age). The vaccine is a combination vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella.