

Advice for Students with Mumps

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a contagious infection caused by a type of virus called paramyxovirus. It is spread through infected droplets of saliva that can be inhaled or picked up from surfaces and transferred to your mouth and nose.

The illness typically occurs 2 to 3 weeks after becoming infected (incubation period). A person becomes infectious, to others, two days before they feel ill and stops being infectious around five days after the onset of their symptoms. People are particularly infectious during the first few days they feel ill.

Mumps can spread through the air in droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. Kissing and other types of contact with people's saliva such as sharing drinking cups can also spread the infection. It can also be picked up by contaminated hands, such as shaking hands with someone with mumps who has coughed or sneezed onto their own hands.

The Mumps vaccine is routinely given in the UK in a single combined vaccine with Measles and Rubella (MMR). For optimum protection people should have two MMR vaccinations, given at least four weeks apart. Students can still develop Mumps after having two vaccinations as the protection is around 90% and immunity may wane with time. However, the illness may be less severe following vaccination. Please check your vaccination history. If you have not had two shots of MMR you can get them free from the College Doctor, if you are registered, please call 01865 311234 to make an appointment with the Practice Nurse for immunisation.

What are the symptoms of Mumps?

Fever

Headache

Swollen parotid glands (this swelling may be painful on either one or both sides of your face/jaw).

Difficulty Chewing

Joint pain

Lethargy

Nausea / loss of appetite

Dry mouth

Not everyone has glandular swelling, but if you do, it normally peaks on day 3-4.

Usually the associated symptoms are fairly mild, similar to a flu like illness. Mumps is usually a time limited disease that resolves with simple symptomatic treatment. You may feel unwell for a week or two.

What do I need to do when I have Mumps?

If you receive a diagnosis of Mumps from your Doctor, you must remain in isolation for five days from the onset of your first symptoms. Please inform your College.

Mumps is a notifiable illness, the diagnosing Doctor will notify Public Health England (PHE) who keep national statistics.

Conclusive confirmation of a Mumps diagnosis will be via a saliva test which will be sent to you, from PHE, through the post. You will be asked to carry out this test yourself, please read all the instructions carefully to ensure the results are accurate.

Please take extra care with your personal hygiene. Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with hot soapy water, always use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough & sneeze and throw it away immediately. Don't prepare food for others and don't share plates/cutlery/cups/glasses/bottles etc. If you are able to do so, please return to your family home during your isolation period, however, you may not use public transport or taxi's whilst you are infectious.

Advice from the College Nurse

You will need to get lots of rest.

Let your Tutors know you are unwell and that you have Mumps.

Drink 2-3 litres of fluid a day to avoid dehydration, especially if you have a fever.

If you have a fever - take medication from the chemist. Students commonly use Paracetamol &/or Ibuprofen for pain and/or fever. Please fully read the leaflet before taking.

Use a warm or cold compress on your enlarged glands to sooth.

Eat food that doesn't require chewing such as a soft diet of soups, porridge, pasta & banana. Citrus fruits & spiced food are best avoided as they stimulate the saliva production in the glands and can aggregate the discomfort. Avoid fatty foods & foods that are difficult to digest such as red meat and processed foods. Foods high in antioxidants such as green veg, peppers and blueberries are good for the immune system. Don't worry if your appetite is not great, as long as you drink plenty and stay hydrated. You can try high calorie drinks like smoothies and sports drinks. Avoid alcohol and smoking.

Take your time to fully recuperate. Avoid strenuous exercise, late nights or excess work, until you feel completely recovered. Doing too much too soon can detrimentally affect your recovery.

Useful Information

- <https://www.spc.ox.ac.uk/welfare>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mumps/>
- <https://patient.info/travel-and-vaccinations/mumps-leaflet>