

# MUMPS

## Information Leaflet

### What is Mumps?

Mumps is a viral illness that causes fever, headache and painful swelling of one or more of the glands around the face. Complications may include viral meningitis, deafness, pancreatitis and orchitis in men after puberty (sterility rarely occurs). Infection in adults is usually more severe and may have more complications than young children.

### How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread from one person to another. Mumps is infectious in saliva from 7 days before swelling and until 8 days after; however, the maximum infectious period is considered to be from 3 days before to 5 days after symptom onset. The time from acquiring the infection to developing symptoms is 12 - 25 days.

When a person is ill with mumps, they should avoid contact with others from the time of diagnosis until 5 days after the onset of swelling by staying home from work or school and staying in a separate room if possible. If you need to be visited in the hospital or in the GP practice, inform them in advance.

### Mumps and pregnancy

Mumps that occurs in pregnant women is generally benign and not more severe than in women who are not pregnant. Like other infections, there is a theoretical risk that mumps during the early months of pregnancy may cause miscarriage and other complications. Mumps does not appear to cause abnormalities in the unborn baby. Most studies on the effects of mumps on the unborn baby were conducted in the 1950s – 60s when the disease was more

common before the mumps vaccine was available.

### Is there any treatment for mumps?

No. Only supportive therapy (bed rest, fluids, paracetamol etc.).

### How can mumps be prevented?

Vaccination is the best way to prevent mumps and mumps complications. This vaccine is included in the combination measles-mumps-rubella (MMR). MMR vaccine is offered in 2 doses. 1 dose of MMR vaccine is about 80% effective in preventing mumps and 2 doses of the vaccine is about 90% effective.

### Should the vaccine be given in pregnancy?

No. MMR should not be administered during pregnancy. The MMR vaccine is a live vaccine. It can be given before or after pregnancy, including to breast feeding women.

### How do I know if I am immune?

A person who has had mumps will be immune (consider all Irish women born before 1978 immune) or has had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine. It is usually not indicated to test pregnant women who have been in contact with mumps, as there is no association with abnormalities in the unborn baby, there is no treatment available and the vaccine cannot be given in pregnancy. However, you need to inform the hospital that you were exposed to Mumps. If your doctor or midwife decides that testing is indicated, the booking blood which was taken at the time of registering your pregnancy will be tested for mumps immunity. You will be informed about the result.

