

# Parotitis - Viral

## Definition

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- Parotitis is a viral infection of the parotid gland in the face.
- The parotid gland makes saliva.

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- **Swelling.** Swelling is in front of each ear along the edge of the jaw. One or both sides can swell.
- **Pain.** The swollen gland can be painful or tender to touch. Pain can be worse with chewing or talking.
- **Fever.** Fever is common with this infection.

### Causes

- **Viruses.** Many viruses can cause parotitis. Some common ones are Epstein-Barr, coxsackievirus, and influenza.
- **Mumps virus.** Once the main cause of parotitis. Now very rare. Reason: the MMR vaccine prevents mumps.
- **Salivary stone.** A tiny stone can block where the saliva squirts out of the parotid gland into the mouth. Not drinking enough water can cause salivary stones. Minerals in saliva make the stones. Mainly seen in adults, sometimes in teens.

## Care Advice

### 1. Key Points

- Parotitis is an infection of a saliva gland in the face.
- There is no specific medicine to fight this viral infection.
- Home treatments will help with symptoms.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Pain and Fever Medicine

- For pain or fevers above 102°F (39°C), give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil). Follow package directions for dosing. No prescription is needed.
- Note: lower fevers are important for fighting infections. If your child has a fever but is comfortable, no medicines are needed.

### 3. Apply Heat

- Put heat on the swollen area. Use a heat pack, heating pad or warm wet washcloth.
- Do this for 10 minutes, as needed. Reason: increases blood flow to the area and speeds healing.
- Caution: avoid burns.

### 4. Massage

- Gently massage the swollen area for a few minutes per day until swelling improves.
- Start massaging in front of the ear and go forward toward the chin.

## 5. **Diet**

- Eat soft foods that do not need much chewing.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Stay hydrated.
- Ice chips or frozen treats may be soothing.
- Avoid sour foods. Reason: they trigger the gland to make saliva. This may worsen the pain.

## 6. **Stop Spread**

- The viruses that cause parotitis are spread through saliva, sneezing and coughing.
- While your child has symptoms, don't let them share food or drinks.
- Cover the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often.

## 7. **What to Expect**

- Fever lasts 3 or 4 days.
- Pain most often stops in 4 or 5 days.
- Swelling can last 6 or 7 days.
- Your child is no longer contagious after one week.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or swallowing
- Fever lasts more than 5 days
- Swelling lasts more than 7 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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