

# >>> IMMUNE PLATOON DISEASE DATABASE <<<

CASE FILE: MASTER MUMPS • REAL NAME: MUMPS • MICROBE TYPE: VIRUS



## PROFILE

Mumps is one attacker with a spiteful sense of humor, giving about one-third of its victims plumped up “chipmunk cheeks.” Here’s how it works. Mumps’ infection settles mainly in the saliva glands that are between the jaw and ear, called “parotid glands” (pronounced puh-RAH-tid). With the mumps virus busy with its dirty work and the body battling back, the glands swell up. In fact, some historians who track diseases say mumps got its name long ago from those swollen cheek lumps and the way they make people mumble. So, Mumble + Lumps = Mumps.

## POWERS & ABILITIES

Mumps is sneaky. Infected people can spread the virus for up to a week before they even feel sick at all. But, this attacker uses that week preparing for an assault that leaves an infected person with fever, muscle aches, headache, and chipmunk cheeks. In some cases, mumps extends an attack to cause swelling in other areas of the body like the chest, testicles, ovaries, and pancreas.

In very rare cases (1 in 2,000), mumps manages to pull off one of its meanest tricks, causing sudden and permanent deafness. Mumps has also been known to team up with one villainous member of the Meningitis Crime Family. Mumps can cause viral meningitis. But, mumps has a lazy streak, too. Some people with mumps have no symptoms or just have signs of a cold and sore throat.

## PREFERRED METHOD OF ATTACK

Like so many disease villains, mumps is an “air and surface” attacker. It spreads

when an infected person coughs or sneezes into the air. Anyone breathing that in, or touching something that’s been coughed or sneezed on and then touching their own mouth has just let in mumps!

## KNOWN WEAKNESSES

Our best weapon, the vaccine against mumps, has nearly stamped out the disease in the U.S. Check out these stats.

Mumps cases in 1967 (before the vaccine) = 200,000+

Mumps cases in 2002 (after the vaccine) = 231

Scientists have come up with a triple-threat vaccine called “MMR” that tackles measles, mumps, and rubella at once. In these vaccines there is mumps virus is so weak and unable to grow that the body can easily fight it off. In fighting the weakling mumps virus, your immune system learns how to beat this attacker and protect you against the real thing.

The vaccine is the best protection because there is no way to cure mumps, only medicines to make a person feel better while their own immune system tackles the virus. However, mumps only gets one chance at an unvaccinated person. Once someone has had mumps, he

or she is typically immune forever because the body has learned how to fight this attacker.

## PREFERRED VICTIMS

Mumps preys on young kids mostly. Before the vaccine, almost all mumps infections (90%) happened to people age 15 or younger. Now the vaccine protects most kids in the U.S. and many other countries. So mumps is attacking older kids and grown-ups more and more. It goes for unvaccinated people and those who have had just one dose of the vaccine when they really needed two.

## PRECAUTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC

**Step 1.** Get vaccinated against mumps. Two doses of the vaccine delivers lifelong protection for 76-95% of the people who get it.

**Step 2.** Besides a vaccine, covering up coughs and sneezes and washing hands often with soap is the only other way to fend off mumps.

## AREA OF OPERATIONS

Mumps launches its attacks throughout the world.

## CRIMINAL RECORD

Mumps’ criminal record is centuries-long. Even a doctor living in the 5th century BC wrote about this infector.