

## **Mumps and it's significance in Hinduism**



Marieammen



Sheetala Devi

We, at Dipika, humbly prostrate and seek the divine blessings of the Mother/Deity of skin diseases, Mother Marieammen ("Maari" meaning power and "ammen" meaning mother), also known as Mother Sheetaladevi, to compile this article. Jai Maarie Mata, Jai Sheetaladevi. We at Dipika shall carefully analyze different backgrounds with regards to Mumps and we hope that this article will enlighten the public as opposed to causing further confusion. Jai Matashree.

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## **An overview of Mumps symptoms, treatment and causes**

### **Introduction**

Mumps was one of the most common ailments affecting people around the world until recent times. However, now, following the development of a particularly effective vaccine against the disease, the number of cases of Mumps have drastically reduced, at least in the developed countries. In the third world countries, it still remains an issue and needs further attention.

### **Definition of mumps (Ayurveda - Karna Mulika Jwara)**

Mumps or *parotitis* is a viral infection of the parotid glands, which are glands that produce saliva - located just below the ear. As a result of a Mumps infection, the parotid glands may swell up, causing bulkiness of the cheeks and the region below the lower jaw.

Ayurveda treats Mumps as a *pitta* (*pitta* refers to qualities reflecting the elements of fire and water) disease. It's Ayurvedic name is *pashangadarbha*. Since mumps is most often accompanied by a preliminary fever, it is also classified as a *jwara* (*jwara* refers to fever and heat). As a *jwara*, it is known as *karma mulika jwara*. Here it must be noted that *pashangadarbha* is the name of the entire condition of mumps, while *karma mulika jwara* is the name given to the fever that precedes mumps.

### **Causes of mumps**

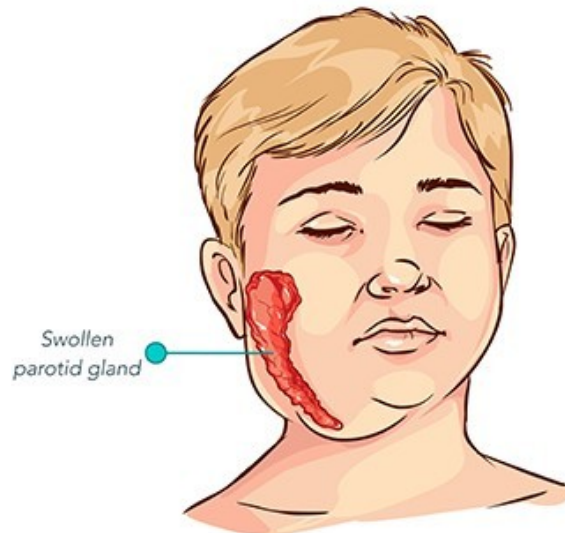
According to Ayurveda, *pashangadarbha* is a disease caused by the vitiation (to impair the quality) of the *pittadosha* - the humor which controls the fire element of the human body.

Mumps is a viral disease. The virus that is responsible for the onset of Mumps in the human body is known as the paramyxovirus (para-myx-ovirus). The virus resides in the saliva of a person. Hence, any contact with the saliva of an infected person is the most probable way to contract Mumps.

### **Symptoms of Mumps**

In certain cases of people suffering from Mumps, no Mumps symptoms may be experienced at all. However, in most cases, approximately two days after the infection, the following Mumps symptoms are often observed:-

The most prominent symptom is the puffiness of the cheeks which is caused by the swelling of the parotid glands. There may be swelling of the earlobes also, which may cause the entire face to appear enlarged. Swelling may persist for a period of three days to a week.



Fever is very common during a Mumps infection, and the temperature of the body can increase up to 103°F/40°C. The fever is one of the initial symptoms of Mumps. A person suffering with Mumps may feel weak and become fatigued quite easily. The person infected with Mumps may experience pain in the cheeks, which is felt more drastically when chewing or swallowing. Persons suffering from Mumps often have a persistent sore throat. In some cases, the aggravation could be serious to the extent that the person finds difficulty in speaking and may speak in whispers.

### **Complications of mumps**

Mumps is a self-limiting disease, i.e. it subsides over time, and the Mumps symptoms are brought under control by the body after a while. Due to this, in most cases, Mumps does not often result in further complications. Certain complications that can occur are as follows:-

- Inflammation of the testicles, termed as orchitis (this may cause sterility of a male if it persists for a lengthy period of time).
- Inflammation of the ovaries, known as oophoritis (this may cause sterility of a female if it persists for a lengthy period of time) and inflammation of the breasts, known as mastitis.

- Inflammation of the pancreas known as pancreatitis.

In rare instances, Mumps can result in severe complications. Such complications of Mumps are as follows:-

- Inflammation of the brain (meningitis) and/or the spinal cord (encephalitis)
- Permanent deafness
- Abortion if a female infected with Mumps is pregnant.

### **Transmission of mumps**

As with most viral infections, there is a high transmission rate with regard to Mumps. This was often the case in the past, before the vaccine was developed.

The Mumps virus, paramyxovirus, thrives in the upper respiratory tract of humans. Hence, it can be transmitted through salivary discharges of an infected person. Therefore, the following activities can transmit Mumps from an infected person to another person:-

- Sharing cups, glasses and other drinking vessels
- Kissing
- Coming in contact with an infected person's saliva in any way

A person with Mumps is very likely to spread the virus to other people. For a period of three to six days after the Mumps symptoms first occur, the person is likely to be infectious. Due to this, much care needs to be taken by the family members of persons who have Mumps.

### **Persons who are at risk of Mumps**

Although Mumps can affect people of all ages, most cases of Mumps are found in children, up to the ages of approximately fourteen years. Mumps can occur from approximately any period of time after five years of age, but cases of occurrence below this age have also been recorded. Children are generally not affected from mumps in the first year of their lives.

### **Prevention and basic care during Mumps**

A significant degree of care is required if there is a person who has Mumps at one's residence or elsewhere. The following tips should be noted:-

- All the utensils of an infected person must be kept and washed separately.

- Physical contact with the patient should be avoided.
- Since some strains of paramyxovirus can be passed through urine, it is also necessary to keep the infected person's clothing separate and wash them separately.

Taking care of a person infected with Mumps at one's residence or elsewhere is very important, however one positive point is that a single infection from Mumps generally gives a person lifelong immunity from the virus. However it is important to take care that the first infection does not spread to other people, else there is risk of an epidemic.

Furthermore, a Mumps patient must take care of the following:-

- The neck must not be exposed to the cold, with specific reference to cold winds. It should always be covered with a scarf or a shawl.
- The person with Mumps should not be exposed to moisture as far as possible, specifically the infected areas. An infected person is generally wiped down with a damp towel as opposed to having a full bath, due to this.
- While sleeping, it is necessary to keep the infected person's body covered with a sheet, to avoid high temperatures and consequential perspiration.
- An infected person should attempt to take care and precaution when coughing or sneezing, as that can spread the paramyxovirus through the saliva.

### **Diet for persons with mumps**

It is important to follow a proper diet during a Mumps infection, due to the fact that the infected person often loses his or her appetite. However, proper nutrition is required in order to remove the imbalance of the *pitta* vitiation. The diet must be a *pitta*-pacifying diet.

People with Mumps must follow the dietary guidelines given below:-

- \* The diet should be a primarily liquid diet. Rice water (kanji) is advised. It can be flavored with some ghee and taken along with a piece of pickle of raw mango.
- \* The foods given to the patient must not be acidic-based; hence all citrus juices and curds are omitted.
- \* Spices such as garlic, ginger and black pepper are good for persons infected with Mumps.

- \* All kinds of oily and pungent foods must be strictly avoided, as these foods may cause the fever to last longer.
- \* Solid foods should suggested-ly be avoided. These foods take longer to digest, and that could aid the digestive fire in one's stomach, i.e. pitta.

### **Ayurvedic treatment of mumps**

Mumps is a condition that has been acknowledged for centuries to the proponents of Ayurveda. For this reason, there has been a lot of research into herbs that are beneficial in the treatment of Mumps. The following is a list of certain herbs traditionally used in the case of a Mumps infection, along with their benefits with regard to the human body.

Ayurvedic name of the herb	Biological name of the herb	Common English name of the herb	Action on the human body
Sunthi	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Ginger	Ginger is likely the most widely known Ayurvedic treatment for Mumps. A slightly moist paste of ginger is applied to the affected areas. When the paste dries off, it results in significant relief from the pain of the Mumps infection.
Lavanga	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>	Clove	The clove oil must be mixed with olive oil and applied on the inside of the cheeks. This provides relief from the pain of the Mumps infection.
Methi	<i>Trigonella foenum graecum</i>	Fenugreek	Seeds of fenugreek are ground with seeds of asparagus. A slightly moist paste of this mixture, made with water, is applied to the affected areas. When the paste dries off, it results in significant relief from the pain of the Mumps infection.
Neem	<i>Azadirachtha indica</i>	Margosa	Neem is also very effective in the treatment of Mumps. A slightly moist paste of these leaves is applied to the affected areas. In order to improve the effectiveness of this remedy, turmeric can be mixed in the paste.

Peepal	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Sacred Fig Tree	The peepal tree is another beneficial remedy. The peepal leaves are mixed with ghee, warmed over a fire and then the paste is applied to the affected areas, resulting in significant relief from the pain of the Mumps infection.
Shatavari	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	Asparagus	Seeds of asparagus are ground with seeds of fenugreek. A slightly moist paste of this mixture, made with water, is applied to the affected areas. When the paste dries off, it results in significant relief from the pain of the Mumps infection.
Harad or Haritaki	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Chebolic Myroblan	Haritaki is one of the most effective Ayurvedic remedies for Mumps. A paste of this herb is applied locally over the affected areas. Haritaki powder is available in most South African prayer and spice shops.

Relief may be experienced by using a paste of limestone and jaggery/gur (Indian sugar) and applying this paste to the swollen areas. Limestone contains calcium which is effective in the reduction of the swelling.

### **THE TRADITIONAL INDIAN MUMPS PRAYERS**

The two styles of prayers detailed below is included NOT to further segregate North and South Indian traditional practices, but rather to encompass both styles. That is the beauty and awesomeness of Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism).

#### **The traditional Mumps prayers in South Africa (North Indian traditional)**

A person who has Mumps must reside indoors, in a room which is first cleansed by disinfecting it, and the infected person should have minimal contact with other persons. The utensils and so forth used by the infected person should only be used by him/her. One person, generally the mother or guardian of the infected person, washes these utensils such that the transmission of the virus can be limited or prevented altogether. The swelling on the neck will likely subside within approximately a week. In certain cases, the infected person may experience pain when swallowing solid food and liquids, therefore “soft” foods are highly recommended within the period of infection. Soft, cooked foods like kitchari or mild-tasting soups are recommended. It is highly recommended that vegetarian foods be consumed in the period of infection. The infected person must sleep on syringaberry leaves. On the infected person’s bed, under a bed sheet, place the syringaberry leaves. Keep a lota/chumbhu of hurdi (turmeric) water with some syringaberry

leaves (inside the lota) outside the house by the front door on the side. When people visit, they will generally know that someone in the house has either Measles, Chicken-pox or Mumps and should be very careful not to contract the virus themselves. The following is traditional and may change from area to area or family to family, in some form or the other.

**Requirements:-** one gold chain (which is borrowed from another female - the mother's (of the infected person) gold chain must not be used), two medium-sized trays, seven *dahlis* (Hindi - sand pebbles, pictured below), one bar stool/bench, one lota of dhaar, one bucket of hurdi (turmeric) water.

In one's yard or a nearby area (if one resides in an apartment), find seven *dahlis* (Hindi - sand pebbles). Place a gold chain around the infected person from the first day until the last day of the Mumps infection. Take seven of these *dahlis* and, one by one, turn each one around the infected person's neck in a clockwise direction, seven times each. After one has completed the seven rounds, keep that dalhi on another tray. Do this for another six times. This tray of offered dahis is kept in one's yard (or, if residing in an apartment, if there is a balcony it is to be kept there, or if there is no balcony, then a designated part of the apartment) in a clean place.

After the Mumps has entirely subsided, these dahlis is disposed off in the yard or if one is residing in an apartment, then in a nearby area where there is sand.



*Dahlis* (Hindi - sand pebbles)

During the daylight hours, turn one *lota/chumbhu* of *dhaar* for three days (from the first day of infection) (or until the Mumps has subsided) around the infected person's whole body three or seven times in a clockwise direction. Offer this *lota/chumbhu* of *dhaar* in one's *Devi Thaan* (the place designated for the offerings of *Dhaar*). If one resides in an apartment, then one can offer the *dhaar* in a pot plant which has sand in it.

On the last day of the Mumps infection, the infected person should sit on a bar stool/bench. The mother or another female takes a bucket of hurdi water (it should be slightly warmed) and pours this over the infected person.

#### The traditional Mumps prayers in South Africa (South Indian traditional)

The same procedure is followed as above, however with regards to the South Indian tradition, on the last day of the infection, the mother of the infected person, or another female, boils three types of beans (for example sugar beans, tiny beans, broad beans, etc.) and prepares *kalee* (a Tamil word for hard porridge). The beans is just boiled and no spices, etc., are added. The infected person sits on a bench/chair/bar stool behind the front door of the house. The mother now turns the *kalee* and boiled beans (both should be in a small bowl and then placed on a tray)



around the infected person's whole body three or seven times in a clockwise direction. These preparations are later disposed off in a clean place in one's garden or, if one is residing in an apartment, then in a nearby area where there is sand.

On the last day of the Mumps infection, the infected person should sit on a bar stool/bench. The mother or another female takes a bucket of hurdi water (it should be slightly warmed) and pours this over the infected person.

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**DISCLAIMER 1:-** It must be borne in mind that while taking any Ayurvedic preparation, the doctor must be consulted first. Most of the herbs do not have any side-effects (and are indeed a regular part of the diet), but some may be allergic to certain herbs and may show adverse reactions.

**DISCLAIMER 2:-** Do note that the information given above is given with good faith. Dipika's free services are not intended to be a substitute for any medical care. The information above is intended for general education purposes and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional and/or medical advice.

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