



Swollen glands in children

There are many lymph glands in the body. They protect the body from infection. They make a white blood cell that kills germs in the body. Lymph glands also trap viruses, bacteria, and cancer cells.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

You can feel your child's lymph glands when they swell up. When a lymph gland swells up from an infection, it usually hurts when you touch it. Sometimes the glands stay swollen for a long time after the infection is gone. They usually don't hurt and are not dangerous.

Watch out for swollen glands that are:

- Hard
- "Rubbery"
- Without pain
- Getting bigger

These glands can be signs of lymphoma (cancer of the lymph glands), leukemia, or some other cancer.

The salivary glands are another kind of gland. They are under the tongue, on the bottom of the mouth, and just below the ear. They are not lymph glands. They make saliva, or "spit." The salivary glands in front of the ears swell up when your child has mumps.



CAUSES

- A throat or ear infection is a common cause of swollen glands in the neck.
- An infection in the feet, legs, or groin can make the lymph glands in the groin swell.
- Mononucleosis can make neck glands swell. (High school and college students call this "mono" or "the kissing disease.")
- Mumps.
- Cat scratch fever. A cat's claws carry this sickness.
- Medicines, like Dilantin®. (This medicine is for epilepsy.)
- Dental work.
- Lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph glands, or leukemia.
- Tuberculosis (TB).

PREVENTION

- Make sure your children's measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) shots are up-to-date.
- Keep your child away from people who have sicknesses they can catch.

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TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Are the glands at the bottom of the neck red and swollen? And are they sore when you touch them?

NO **YES** ➡ **SEE DOCTOR**



Are the swollen glands between the jaw and under the ear? (This could be mumps.)

NO **YES** ➡ **SEE DOCTOR**



Are the swollen glands near the back of the neck? Is there a pink rash on the face? (This could be German measles.)

NO **YES** ➡ **SEE DOCTOR**



Does your child have a sore throat or fever?

NO **YES** ➡ **SEE DOCTOR**



Has your child had swollen glands for more than 5 days and you don't know why?

NO **YES** ➡ **SEE DOCTOR**



Are the swollen glands 1 or more inches big?

NO **YES** ➡ **CALL DOCTOR**



Does your child have swollen glands and is he or she taking Dilantin?

NO **YES** ➡ **CALL DOCTOR**



USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE

There isn't much you can do for swollen glands. You have to treat the problem that made them swell. Watch to see if the glands get bigger. Watch to see if any other glands swell up. Call the doctor if the glands keep getting bigger, or if they last for more than 5 days.

Try these tips to make your child feel better:

- Tell your child to rest when they feel tired. Tell them not to "overdo it."
- Give your child plenty to drink.
- Put warm, wet washcloths on the swollen glands if they are painful.
- Put antiseptic creams on scratches and other wounds to avoid infection.