

Swollen Glands



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.

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**.

What Causes Swollen Glands?

- 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).

How to Keep Your Child from Getting Swollen Glands

- Make sure your children's **measles, mumps, and rubella** (MMR) shots are up-to-date. (See "Vaccine Schedule" at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Keep your child away from people who have sicknesses they can catch.



Questions to Ask

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

YES  See Doctor

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

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**.)

YES  See Doctor

Does your child have a sore throat or fever?

YES  See Doctor

Has your child had swollen glands for more than 3 weeks and you don't know why?

YES  See Doctor

Are the swollen glands 1 or more inches big?

YES  Call Doctor

Flowchart continued in next column

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



Self-Care Tips

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 3 or 4 weeks.

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 and **antiseptic** creams on scratches and other wounds.

