



Infectious Mononucleosis “Mono” Fact Sheet

What is infectious mononucleosis?

Infectious mononucleosis, also called “mono”, is a contagious disease. Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is the most common cause of infectious mononucleosis, but other viruses can also cause this disease.

Who gets infectious mononucleosis?

Most people are infected with EBV sometime in their lives, but very few become ill. In the United States, illness usually occurs in older children, high school and college students.

How is the virus spread?

The virus is spread from person to person by saliva (on hands or toys, or by kissing). The virus may rarely be spread by blood transfusion.

What are the symptoms of infectious mononucleosis?

The virus causes fever, sore throat, swollen glands and a feeling of tiredness. Most people get better in two to four weeks; however, some people may feel fatigued for several more weeks. Very young children may not develop any symptoms after being infected.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms appear 4 to 6 weeks after infection with the virus.

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How long is a person able to spread the virus?

The virus is carried in the throat and can be spread during the illness and for as long as a year after illness.

What is the treatment for infectious mononucleosis?

No treatment other than rest is needed for most cases. You can relieve symptoms by staying hydrated and taking over the counter medications for pain and fever. Persons with very hoarse (swollen) throats should see their doctor.

Can a person get infectious mononucleosis again?

People who get the illness rarely get it again.

What can a person do to stop the spread of EBV?

You can help protect yourself by not kissing or sharing drinks, food, or personal items, like toothbrushes, with people who have infectious mononucleosis. At present, there is no vaccine available to prevent “mono”.

*For further information, contact the
Oklahoma City-County Health
Department (405) 425-4437*

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