



# Infectious Mononucleosis Fact Sheet

## What is infectious mononucleosis?

Infectious mononucleosis is a viral illness caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV).

## 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 via bodily fluids, especially 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 which usually last for several 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.

## 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.

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### **What is the treatment for infectious mononucleosis?**

No treatment other than rest is needed for most cases; 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?**

Avoid contact with the body fluids (commonly saliva) of someone who is infected with the virus. Currently, there is no vaccine available to prevent mononucleosis.

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

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