

INFECTIOUS MONONUCLEOSIS



■ ■ ■ Description

Infectious mononucleosis (also called mono) is a viral infection caused by Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). It is easily spread through saliva, giving it the nickname the “kissing disease.” Children infected with the virus are often without symptoms, but in adolescents and adults it is often the cause for missed school and work days.

■ ■ ■ Common Signs and Symptoms

- No symptoms for up to a month after being infected
- Extreme fatigue
- Tiredness (sleeping 12 to 16 hours a day)
- Fever
- Headaches
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Bumps on the neck that you can feel and are tender
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Joint aches
- Rash
- Feeling of fullness in your belly

■ ■ ■ Preventive Measures

- Avoid contact with infected saliva.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils.
- Avoid sharing food.

■ ■ ■ General Treatment Considerations

There is no specific treatment for the viral illness. You should get plenty of rest and take lots of fluids. For fever and sore throat, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol). If your sore throat gets worse, see your doctor to see if you have developed a more serious throat or sinus infection. Uncommonly, the tonsils may develop a pocket of infection called an abscess, in which case an antibiotic will be prescribed. EBV infection may also enlarge your liver and spleen. You should avoid alcohol, which may further injure your liver. Until the infection is cured, you should also avoid contact sports, heavy lifting, and any kind of strenuous activity to reduce the potential risk of rupturing your spleen. This limitation is necessary until your spleen returns to normal size. Your symptoms should gradually improve after 1 to 2 weeks, but your return to sports may take a couple of months.

Notes:

(Up to 4400 characters only)

Notes and suggestions