

FACT SHEET **MONONUCLEOSIS (Mono)**

What is mononucleosis?

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

What are the symptoms mononucleosis?

They include 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 infection.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms appear 4 to 6 weeks after contracting the virus.

How is mononucleosis spread?

It is spread from person-to-person by direct saliva contact (by sharing food or drink, or saliva on the hands of young children or toys, or by kissing). The virus may rarely be spread by blood transfusion.

Who gets 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 long is a person infectious?

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

What is the treatment for 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 mononucleosis again?

People who have had mononucleosis do not usually get it again.

Do infected people need to be excluded from school, work, or day care?

No.

What can be done to help prevent the spread of mononucleosis?

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

Iowa Dept. of Public Health Reviewed 8/10

Oskaloosa School Recommendations:

Mono and Sports

Doctors usually recommend that kids who get mono avoid sports for at least a month after symptoms are gone because the spleen is usually enlarged temporarily from the illness. An enlarged spleen can rupture easily — causing internal bleeding, fever, and abdominal pain — and require emergency surgery. Vigorous activities, contact sports, weightlifting, cheerleading, or even wrestling with siblings or friends should be avoided until your doctor gives the OK.

Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help to relieve the fever and aching muscles. Remember, **never give aspirin** to a child who has a viral illness because this has been associated with the development of [Reye syndrome](#), which may lead to liver failure and can be fatal.

KidsHealth®