

## Mononucleosis, Infectious

### Description

An infectious viral disease that affects the lungs, liver, and lymphatic system. It usually affects children and young adults (from 12 to 40 years of age).

### Frequent signs and symptoms

- Fever.
- Sore throat (sometimes severe).
- Appetite loss.
- Fatigue.
- Swollen lymph glands, usually in the neck, underarms, or groin.
- Enlarged spleen.
- Enlarged liver.
- Jaundice with yellow skin and eyes (sometimes).
- Headache.
- General aching

### Causes

A contagious virus (Epstein-Barr virus). It is passed from person to person by close contact, such as kissing, shared food, or coughing.

### Risk increases with

- Stress.
- Recent illness.
- Fatigue or overwork. The high rate among college students and military recruits may result from too little rest and crowded living conditions.
- High School or College Students

### Preventive measures

Avoid close contact with persons having infectious mononucleosis especially with saliva contact.

### Expected outcomes

It usually clears up on its own in 10 days to 6 months. Fatigue usually lasts for 3 to 6 weeks after other symptoms get better. A few patients have a chronic form in which symptoms last for months or years.

### **General Measures**

- No specific cure or treatment is available. Extra rest and healthy diet are important. There is no need to keep away from other people. Do avoid close contact so the germs aren't spread.
- To relieve the sore throat, gargle frequently with double-strength tea or warm salt-water (1 teaspoon salt to 8 oz. of water).
- Don't strain hard for bowel movements. This may injure an enlarged spleen.

### **Medications**

- For minor pain, you may use nonprescription drugs such as acetaminophen. Don't use aspirin in children under age 18.
- If symptoms are severe, you may be prescribed a short course of cortisone drugs.

### **Activity**

- Rest in bed while you have fever. Resume activity gradually. Rest when you are tired.
- Don't join in contact sports until at least 1 month after complete recovery.

### **Diet**

- No special diet. Drink at least 8 glasses of water or juice a day (or more) during periods of fever.

### **Notify Doctor if**

- You or a family member has symptoms of infectious mononucleosis.
- The following occur during treatment:
  - Fever over 102°F (38.9°C).
  - Constipation, which may cause straining.
  - Severe pain in the upper left abdomen
  - Yellowing of the skin.
  - Difficulty swallowing or breathing

### **Possible complications**

- Ruptured spleen, resulting in emergency surgery.
- Anemia.
- In rare cases, the heart, lungs or central nervous system could become involved.

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