

What is it?

Mononucleosis, commonly known as “mono”, is an infection caused by the Epstein-Barr Virus. Symptoms of the illness may include feeling tired and unwell, fever, headache, sore throat, and swollen glands around the throat. The area around the eyes may be puffy. Occasionally there may be liver involvement and a faint rash may be detected. Recovery usually occurs within 4 weeks but a severe case may take longer.

Who is at risk?

The infection usually occurs in high school and college students. It is uncommon in young children. Most adults have acquired immunity due to the fact most Epstein-Barr infections are asymptomatic.

How is it spread?

Mono is spread through contact with infected saliva. Droplet spread and intimate oral contact such as kissing is the principal mode of spread. There is also some possibility of spread from saliva on objects. The virus may be transmitted by blood transfusion but does not cause acute clinical disease.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment other than treating the symptoms. Resting and drinking plenty of fluids is also recommended. There is no benefit in forced bed rest. No immunization is currently available for infectious mononucleosis.

What can I do to protect myself?

The best protection is to avoid contact with the saliva of someone who has the disease. Good personal hygiene should be practiced

Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 x349. Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | www.hpepublichealth.ca

References

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Epstein-Barr Virus & Infectious Mononucleosis, May 2006.
- Chin, J., (Ed.), (2000). Control of Communicable Diseases in Man. (17th Ed.).

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