



MONONUCLEOSIS

What is Mononucleosis?

Infectious Mononucleosis or “Mono” is an acute viral illness that is most common during older childhood and young adulthood. The Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is the most common cause of infectious mononucleosis. Humans are the only source of infection. Increased occurrence during a particular season has not been documented. In the United States, as many as 95% of adults between the ages of 35 and 40 years old have been infected.

What are the symptoms of “Mono”?

Common symptoms include fatigue, fever, sore throat, and swollen lymph glands. Less common are headache and abdominal pain (due to a swollen spleen or liver). Serious complications are rare. Symptoms may occur anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks after exposure to an infected person and generally disappear in 7 – 10 days. However, general fatigue may last several weeks with some individuals. There are no known problems associated with Mono during pregnancy. *Once a person is infected and recovered, it is possible for the virus to remain dormant the throat and blood and reactivate later.* The virus has been identified in the saliva of the persons with no symptoms of infection. Many children infected with EBV usually have mild or no symptoms.

Is it contagious? How is it spread?

The illness is mildly contagious. An infected person can spread the illness to others for a period of weeks. It is unknown the exact amount of time the person is contagious. Mono is nicknamed the “kissing disease” because it is believed that it is transmitted person to person through saliva. Shared drinks or straws, soiled tissues, and hands may also spread the disease. Transmission through the air and blood does not normally occur.

What is the treatment for “Mono”?

There is no specific treatment for Mononucleosis. Plenty of rest and a well- balanced diet are very important along with pain relievers to reduce fever and discomfort. A gradual return to normal activities and avoidance of contact sports are generally recommended until completely recovered. Some people can take several months to regain their full strength and energy.

How can it be prevented?

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent mononucleosis. However, the spread of the disease can be reduced by following these simple commonsense steps:

- Good handwashing
- Avoid drinking beverages from the same container as another person
- Avoid sharing eating utensils or straws
- Practice respiratory etiquette. Cover a cough or sneeze and properly dispose of soiled tissues

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
SCHD Communicable Disease Unit 330-375-2662
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com