



## **CYTOMEGALOVIRUS FACT SHEET**

### **What is cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection?**

- CMV is a very common childhood viral infection that is often symptom free in children. If older children have any symptoms at all, it is typically mild with some fever. Infection is nearly universal and not a threat to most individuals. Over 89% of adults had CMV infection in childhood, and it is rare to get it twice.

### **How is CMV spread?**

- CMV is spread from one person to another through blood, saliva, urine, and other secretions from infected children. It can be spread from a mother to her infant before, during and after birth. It can be spread through kissing and sexual activity.

### **Who is at risk after getting a CMV infection?**

- Only immune deficient persons and unborn infants (fetuses) are at risk for serious problems after getting CMV. Even then, not all fetuses are affected. Many infants whose mothers were infected during pregnancy are free of disease.

### **How do you control the spread of CMV?**

- Excretion of CMV is so prevalent that isolation is impractical and inappropriate. Those not wanting to get CMV should practice good hand washing techniques, particularly when they are in contact with body fluids, including after diaper changing (use gloves) or assisting individuals with toileting. The most important routes of transmission are via contact with urine or saliva.
- Routine screening to determine who is susceptible and who has already had CMV is not done because most have already had CMV and because there is a low risk of serious illness.
- This virus is not easily spread. Very close and prolonged physical contact is necessary to transmit CMV.

### **Additional Information:**

#### Students with CMV

There is no problem admitting infants, children and adults known to have CMV to school. There are plenty of others already in any school with CMV that we simply don't know about.

#### Women (staff member, volunteer, etc.) of child-bearing age:

Any woman, who anticipates pregnancy and is involved with toileting and diapering of others, should consult her physician regarding the need for a screening test (blood titer).

If CMV screening test is "negative" (meaning the woman has never had CMV before), and the woman is in her first trimester of pregnancy, she needs to decide with her physician whether or not she'll continue working closely with children (diapering, etc) or if another job assignment is required.