

FACT SHEET ON INFECTIOUS MONONUCLEOSIS (“MONO”)

What is Mononucleosis?

Mononucleosis is commonly known as “mono” and is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus.

What are the signs and symptoms of Mononucleosis?

In Children:

- Young children often get no symptoms.
- School-age children can get a mild brief illness with sore throat and swollen lymph glands, with or without fever. It is generally not distinguished from a common cold.

In Adolescents and Adults:

- Only 35% to 50% of adolescents and young adults get symptoms.
- Symptoms are: fever, sore throat, fatigue, swollen lymph glands.
- Symptoms can be pronounced and long-lasting (1-2 months) compared to symptoms in children
- Physical examination can reveal a swollen spleen or liver in some adolescents and adults.
- Patients with Mononucleosis who take Amoxicillin can develop a rash.
- In the USA, 95% of adults have already had Mononucleosis by age 40.

How does this virus spread?

- Direct contact with saliva and other close personal contact (e.g., kissing or sharing objects that have saliva on them, like cups or toothbrushes or cigarettes)
- Blood transfusions can spread Mononucleosis.
- Once exposed, it can take 30-50 days to develop symptoms.
- The virus can remain for life in very small quantities in some person’s throat and blood. These people are the primary source of infection for person-to-person transmission. They are infectious to others intermittently throughout their lives.

Home Management

- Proper hand washing technique, for everyone and especially for food preparers.
- Avoid kissing that involves saliva.
- Avoid sharing cups, bottles, cans and other objects with saliva on it.
- Clean and sanitize your child’s toys and utensils before they are shared.
- Do not donate blood if prepare foods for others, if there are signs of mononucleosis.
- Your child has Mononucleosis; he/she needs to stay home from school if he/she is not well enough to participate. If he/she feels well enough, there are no restrictions on coming to school.
- Avoid contact sports if there is an enlarged spleen. Resume when spleen is no longer enlarged.