

# Infectious Mononucleosis

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child may have been exposed to **infectious mononucleosis (also called “mono”)** while at child care.

## **What is infectious mononucleosis?**

Infectious mononucleosis is a viral infection usually caused by the Epstein-Barr virus.

## **What are the symptoms of infectious mononucleosis?**

Those who are infected often have no symptoms, but some may have fever, sore throat, tiredness, swollen glands, or rash.

## **How serious is infectious mononucleosis?**

Infectious mononucleosis is usually a mild illness in infants and young children. Worse symptoms are often seen in young adults. Rarely, the infection can cause a severe illness, particularly in those with weakened immune systems.

## **How does a person get infectious mononucleosis?**

Because the virus is in saliva, it is easily spread by toys that an infected child has put in the mouth. Sharing drinks and kissing are other common ways of spreading the virus.

## **How long does it take to come down with infectious mononucleosis after a person is exposed?**

Symptoms appear 4-6 weeks after a child is exposed.

## **When is a person with infectious mononucleosis contagious?**

A person with infectious mononucleosis may be able to spread the infection for weeks; some healthy people can shed the virus on and off throughout life.

## **How can I help prevent the spread of infectious mononucleosis?**

- Wash hands well and often with soap and water, especially after touching saliva or items contaminated with saliva.
- Clean, rinse, and sanitize toys regularly at child care and after contact with saliva.
- Prevent sharing of food, drink, and personal items which may touch the mouth, such as eating utensils, toothbrushes, or towels.
- Avoid kissing children on the mouth.

## **What is the treatment for infectious mononucleosis?**

The illness usually gets better on its own without any treatment. Sometimes medication is needed for severe symptoms. Antivirals and antibiotics are not effective.

## **If my child develops infectious mononucleosis, must s/he stay away from child care?**

No, if s/he feels well enough to participate in activities and does not have fever or other symptoms that require exclusion.

