Mononucleosis

Public Health
Seattle & King County

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

☐ **because you or your child may have been exposed to infectious mononucleosis.** If you believe your child has developed **mononucleosis**, contact your medical provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately after the diagnosis has been made.

☐ **for informational purposes only.**

What is infectious mononucleosis?
Infectious mononucleosis is a viral illness caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). Most people become infected with this virus at some time in their lives.

What are the symptoms of infectious mononucleosis?
Symptoms of illness appear 4 to 6 weeks after an individual is exposed to the virus. Young children often show mild or no symptoms of illness. Older children and adults who have mononucleosis may have fever*, sore throat, swollen tonsils, fatigue, headache, and swollen glands. These symptoms may last from one to several weeks.

How is infectious mononucleosis spread?
Infectious mononucleosis is spread from person to person through contact with the saliva of an infected person. The virus can persist in the saliva for months. The virus is not normally spread through air or blood.

Who may become ill with infectious mononucleosis?
Most adults have been exposed to the Epstein-Barr virus by the age of 18 and are therefore immune. Once a person has been infected, the virus stays dormant in the cells of the throat and in the blood for the rest of the person's life. Periodically, the virus can reactivate and be found in the saliva of persons who have no symptoms. Many healthy people can carry and spread the virus intermittently for life.

How is infectious mononucleosis diagnosed?
Infectious mononucleosis is diagnosed by a medical professional by considering the symptoms and then confirming the diagnosis through laboratory testing.

How is infectious mononucleosis treated?
No specific treatment is available for infectious mononucleosis. Most people with infectious mononucleosis require only general comfort measures to help ease the symptoms, including getting plenty of rest and eating a healthy diet. Do not give aspirin to a child with fever, as this has been associated with Reye Syndrome.

* Fever is defined as: temperature above 100°F (37.8°C) under the arm or 101°F (38.3°C) orally.

How can the spread of infectious mononucleosis be reduced?

- Use good handwashing technique to reduce transmission of infectious mononucleosis

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Adapted from the Snohomish Health District

- Avoid sharing personal articles that may be contaminated with saliva, such as drinking cups and eating utensils
- Make sure that dishes are sanitized by heat or with a chemical sanitizer
- Use a sanitizing solution on toys and surfaces on a regular basis. Remove mouthed toys from play areas until they can be sanitized.
- Notify your child care provider or the school of the diagnosis

Exclude from group setting?

A person with infectious mononucleosis can remain in the school or child care environment provided that he or she is able to participate in the usual activities and he is fever free without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

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Reference:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools pages 123-124