

# Glandular fever (Infectious Mononucleosis)

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*Infectious mononucleosis mostly affects teenagers and young adults. The disease is spread through saliva and can cause fever, sore throat, and swollen lymph nodes. Illness usually lasts between one week and several weeks. People with infectious mononucleosis should avoid kissing others, regularly wash their hand and not share drink containers.*

## What is infectious mononucleosis?

Infectious mononucleosis (also known as glandular fever) is a viral disease caused by infection with *Epstein-Barr virus* (EBV).

## What are the symptoms?

- Infection with EBV usually causes no or few symptoms in young children
- Approximately half of the infections in teenagers and young adults cause symptoms
- Symptoms include fever, sore throat, swollen lymph glands, tiredness, and feeling generally unwell. The doctor may find swelling of the spleen or liver
- The illness usually lasts between one week and several weeks. A small proportion of people can be sick for months
- Most people make a complete recovery
- Once infected, the virus remains in the body for life.

## How is it spread?

- Infectious mononucleosis is spread from person to person through direct contact with saliva
- It can be spread from people who are sick with the illness or by healthy people who carry and can spread the virus intermittently for life
- The time from infection to appearance of symptoms ranges from 4 to 6 weeks.

## Who is at risk?

- Anybody who has not been previously infected can get infected with EBV. By the time they are adults, most people will have been infected but only a proportion will have had symptoms
- Rarely, symptoms can recur in people with poorly functioning immune systems.

## How is it prevented?

Spread of the virus can be prevented through:

- Careful hand washing with soap and running water, especially after sneezing and coughing and before touching other people
- Avoiding saliva contact (eg kissing) with people who are sick with infectious mononucleosis

- Thorough cleaning with soap and water of soiled objects, such as toys of sick children.
- Don't share drink containers

### How is it diagnosed?

A blood test can confirm the diagnosis in a patient who is suspected to have infectious mononucleosis.

### How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for infectious mononucleosis. Your doctor can advise on treatment for symptoms such as fever and sore throat. Rest and a balanced diet may be helpful.

### What is the public health response?

Infectious mononucleosis is not notifiable in NSW. Cases are not excluded from childcare, school or work, but should be advised on how to help prevent spread and encouraged to rest at home until they feel better.

For further information please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 or visit the New South Wales Health website [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)