
Cytomegalovirus

Description: Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus that usually causes no disease. Most people (50-80 percent) have caught CMV by adulthood without even being aware of it. Once a person has been infected, the virus remains in the body, usually in an inactive state, for life. If a person is stressed, develops cancer or becomes pregnant, the infection may become active for a while. Most women already have the virus before they become pregnant. If the virus becomes active, the unborn child may also get infected but usually has no side effects. If a woman gets CMV for the first time while she is pregnant, the risk of disease in the baby is greater. About two to five babies per 100 babies born to mothers who first got infected during pregnancy will have symptoms of CMV infection at birth.

Symptoms: There usually are no symptoms. Occasionally fever, swollen glands or fatigue may occur.

How is it Spread: The virus is spread person-to-person by close contact with body fluids that contain CMV, such as urine, saliva, blood, cervical secretions and semen. Most people get the virus as children in one of three ways:

- 1.) During birth from cervical secretions.
- 2.) Through breast milk.
- 3.) From person-to-person contact with saliva or urine. In most cases the infection causes no symptoms.

Incubation Period: Usually 2-12 weeks

How Long Can a Person Spread the Infection to Others? The infection can be spread as long as the virus is shed in body secretions, which can be months or years.

Responsibilities Of Parents and Caregivers: Because CMV is a common virus among children and adults, it is not necessary for parents to inform the child care provider that their child has it. CMV is not a reportable disease.

Control of Spread: Shedding of CMV in saliva and urine is common in children under age 5. In some studies, as many as 40 percent of healthy infants and toddlers in child care facilities may be shedding the virus at any one time. Therefore, it is not necessary to exclude these children from child care. Women of childbearing age working with young children should always practice good personal hygiene. This means good hand washing after contact with body secretions and especially after changing diapers or assisting in toilet care.

Treatment: None