
Infectious Mononucleosis

Description: Infectious mononucleosis is a viral illness that affects certain blood cells. It is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). EBV is believed to be present in saliva.

Symptoms: Most young children infected with EBV show no symptoms, unlike older children and adults, who may have fever, fatigue, headache, swollen glands, red rash on roof of mouth, occasional abdominal pain and inflamed throat and tonsils.

How it is Spread: Infectious mononucleosis is spread from person to person through contact with the saliva (on hands, cups or kissing) of an infected person. The virus spreads more rapidly among children in closed or over-crowded conditions. Most adults have been exposed to EBV by the age of 18 years and are immune.

Incubation: Symptoms appear from 4-6 weeks after exposure.

How long Can a Person Spread the Disease to Others? The virus is shed in the throat during the illness and for up to a year after infection.

Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers: If a person in your facility develops infectious mononucleosis:

- The infected person may return to the child care setting when he or she is able to participate in usual activities.
- Make sure all children and adults do not share eating or drinking utensils.
- Make sure all children and adults follow good hand washing practices.

Control: Avoid activities involving the transfer of body fluids with someone who is currently or recently infected with the virus.

Treatment: No treatment other than rest is needed in the vast majority of cases.