

# FACT SHEET

# Mononucleosis

## What is mononucleosis?

Mononucleosis or “mono” is a viral illness most commonly caused by the Epstein-Barr virus. It occurs primarily in adolescents and young adults. Infected individuals experience fatigue, fever, and a general feeling of malaise and lethargy.

## How is it spread?

Mono is mildly contagious and is usually spread through bodily fluids, most commonly saliva.

## What are the symptoms?

- Extreme fatigue
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Head and body aches
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck and armpits
- Rash
- Swollen liver and/or spleen
- Enlarged spleen
- Enlarged liver

## How is it prevented?

There is no vaccine to protect against infectious mononucleosis. You can help protect yourself by not kissing or sharing drinks, food, or personal items, like toothbrushes, with people who have infectious mononucleosis. Always remember to use good hygiene measures including hand washing.

## How is it treated?

There is no cure for mononucleosis. Treatment consists of symptom management, including staying well hydrated, getting plenty of rest, and taking over-the-counter medications for fever and pain. If you have infectious mononucleosis, you should not take penicillin antibiotics like ampicillin or amoxicillin. Based on the severity of the symptoms, a healthcare provider may recommend treatment of specific organ systems affected by infectious mononucleosis. Because your spleen may become enlarged as a result of infectious mononucleosis, you should avoid contact sports until you fully recover. Participating in contact sports can be strenuous and may cause the spleen to rupture.

*This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).*