

GET THE FACTS

Mononucleosis

What is mononucleosis (mono)?

Infectious mononucleosis, also called “mono,” or “kissing disease,” is one of the most common human viruses in the world, caused by Epstein-Barr virus (EBV).

What are the symptoms?

Most infected persons will not have any symptoms. Those who do have symptoms may demonstrate extreme fatigue, fever, inflamed/sore throat, headaches, body aches, swollen lymph nodes in the neck and armpits, enlarged spleen, swollen liver, and rash.

How long does this disease last?

Most people infected with mono get better within two to four weeks while, some people may feel fatigued for several more weeks. However, the symptoms of infectious mononucleosis can occasionally last for six months or longer.

How is mono spread?

Mono is primarily spread through bodily fluid, especially saliva, through kissing, and by sharing drinks and eating utensils. However, it can also be spread during sexual contact through blood and semen, blood transfusions, and organ transplantations.

Who is at risk for mono infection?

Teens and young adults are most likely to develop the classic symptoms of mono. They also tend to have the most severe symptoms.

What preventive measures and treatments are available?

No vaccine is currently available to protect persons against infectious mononucleosis. Risk of spread can be decreased by not kissing, or sharing drinks, food, or personal items, like toothbrushes, with persons infected with infectious mononucleosis.

Treatment is supportive and should involve:

- Drinking fluids to stay hydrated, getting plenty of rest, and taking over-the-counter medications for pain and fever.
- Not taking penicillin antibiotics such as ampicillin or amoxicillin.
- Avoiding contact sports (your spleen may become enlarged) until fully recovered. Participating in contact sports can be strenuous and may cause the spleen to rupture.
- Specific treatment for affected organ systems as determined by the individual’s health care provider.



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What should schools do?

- Teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Young children should be supervised and assisted with handwashing as needed. Provide staff, teachers, and students with hand sanitizer. Post handwashing posters in visible areas around the school.
- Clean and sanitize toys and utensils before individuals share the toys/ utensils
- Avoid kissing individual on the mouth
- Ensure all individuals have their own utensils, cups, and toothbrushes
- Notify exposed family and staff members
- Refer pregnant women to their healthcare provider

What are recommendations for exclusion?

No exclusion is needed unless:

- The individual meets other exclusion criteria such as fever, with change in behavior.
- The individual is not able to participate in school activities and staff or caregivers determine that they cannot care for the child, without compromising the health of other individuals.

For more information, visit [[About Epstein-Barr Virus \(EBV\) | CDC](#) or [Infectious mononucleosis | The BMJ](#)].

