



Mononucleosis (Mono)

What is Mononucleosis (Mono)?

Mono is an infection caused by the *Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV)*. Symptoms in young children are generally mild, while symptoms in adolescents and young adults tend to be more severe. *Symptoms usually last about 3-4 weeks.* Common symptoms of Mono include: fever, sore throat, fatigue, weakness, swollen glands in your neck and armpits, loss of appetite, night sweats. Sometimes, fatigue can linger for a *months*.

How do people get Mono?

The Mono virus (EBV) is found in saliva and mucus. It is usually passed from one person to another through kissing, which is why it is often called the “*kissing disease*”. However, Mono can also be passed through exposure to a cough, sneeze or through sharing food utensils with someone who has Mono. Signs of Mono usually develop 4 to 6 weeks after you're exposed to the virus. Generally, people only get Mono *once*. There isn't a cure for mono. The virus slowly goes away on its own.

How is Mono diagnosed?

One common test used to diagnose mono is called the *Monospot test*. Sometimes other blood tests (like *EBV antibody titers*) are needed if the results of the Monospot test aren't clear, especially in the acute phase.

Does Mono have any complications?

The main complication with Mono is the enlargement of the spleen. In severe cases of Mono, the spleen can rupture (tear), though this is rare.

How is Mono treated?

The main goal of treatment is to relieve your symptoms.

- *Rest.* Get plenty of *sleep!* Sleep helps your body fight infection
- Drink plenty of fluids. They help prevent dehydration
- For sore throat – gargle salt water, throat lozenges, NSAIDs (ie: Ibuprofen, Aleve)

Do I need an antibiotic?

Antibiotics are *not* effective against Mono (because Mono is caused by a virus not bacteria). Unfortunately, we haven't found an effective antiviral medication. Occasionally patients can have Mono in addition to Strep throat. In this case, antibiotics are often prescribed.

What about sports and exercise?

Exercise and sports puts you at risk of rupturing your spleen, especially if it is enlarged. To decrease the chances of your spleen rupturing, I recommend:

- Very light physical activity may be safe initially
- Avoid sports & exercise of any kind until your doctor tells you it's safe – usually about **3 weeks**
- Avoid contact sports for about **4 weeks**

