

# Mononucleosis



## What is Mononucleosis?

Infectious mononucleosis, also called “mono,” is a contagious disease most often seen among teenagers and young adults, especially college students.

## Spread of Disease

Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is the most common cause of infectious mononucleosis, but other viruses can cause this disease. Typically, the virus spreads through saliva such as during kissing. However, exposure can occur through coughing, sneezing, or sharing a glass or food utensils.

## Signs and Symptoms

Typical symptoms of mono usually appear four to six weeks after being infected with the virus. These symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Swollen spleen
- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes in neck and armpits
- Rash
- Sore throat
- Swollen tonsils

Signs and symptoms like fever and sore throat get better within a couple of weeks, but fatigue, enlarged lymph nodes and a swollen spleen may last a few weeks longer.

## Diagnosis

Healthcare providers typically diagnose mono based on symptoms.

Laboratory tests are not usually needed to diagnose mono. However, specific laboratory tests may be needed to identify the cause of illness in people who do not have a typical case of mono.

## Treatment

Symptoms of mono can be relieved by:

- Drinking fluids to stay hydrated
- Getting plenty of rest
- Taking over-the-counter medications for pain and fever

Mono usually is not very serious. Complications may be more serious than the disease itself. Complications may include:

- Enlargement of the spleen can occur. In extreme cases, it may rupture causing sharp, sudden pain in the left side of the upper abdomen. If such pain occurs, seek medical attention immediately. Surgery may be needed.
- Problems with the liver may include hepatitis or jaundice.

## Prevention

Mononucleosis is spread through saliva. If infected, help prevent spreading the virus to others by not kissing or sharing food, dishes, glasses and utensils until several days after fever has subsided and even longer, if possible. Disinfect items that came in contact with nose and throat secretions of infected person.

The Epstein-Barr virus may persist in saliva for months after the infection. No vaccine exists to prevent mononucleosis.



***For more sources of information on this topic visit:***

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT [www.scchealth.co](http://www.scchealth.co)

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES [www.michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs)

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)