



CALHOUN COUNTY  
**Public Health Department**

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269-969-6370

Fact Sheet

## **Infectious Mononucleosis (Mono)**

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### **What is infectious mononucleosis (mono)?**

Mono is a contagious viral infection, commonly caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). In the United States, as much as 95% of adults between 35 and 40 years have been infected by EBV.

### **Who gets mono?**

Anyone can get mono, but it is most common in teens and young adults. Many children become infected with EBV, and these infections usually cause no symptoms at all. When infection occurs during adolescence or young adulthood, 35% to 50% develop symptoms.

### **How is mono spread?**

Mono is spread person to person by saliva or by objects or hands exposed to saliva. These viruses can also spread through blood and semen during sexual contact, blood transfusions, and organ transplantations.

### **How long is mono contagious?**

The mono virus can remain in saliva for one year or more after infection, even after symptoms are gone. The person should be considered contagious during this entire time period. Some people can become carriers when the virus reactivates and is able to be spread again after the initial illness. Reactivation usually occurs without symptoms of illness.

### **What are the symptoms of mono?**

Typical symptoms of mono appear four to six weeks after infection with the virus.

Common symptoms include:

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

### **How is mono diagnosed?**

Mono is typically diagnosed based on symptoms. Laboratory tests are not typically necessary but may be needed to identify the cause of the illness in people that do not have a typical case.

### **What is the treatment for mono?**

There is no specific treatment for infectious mononucleosis, other than treating the symptoms. No antiviral drugs or vaccines are available. If you have mono, do not take penicillin antibiotics (ampicillin or amoxicillin).

Most people get better in two to four weeks, but the fatigue may last for several months. Staying hydrated, getting plenty of rest, and taking over-the-counter medications for pain or fever can relieve symptoms.

### **Are there complications from mono?**

Complications are rare. Infectious mononucleosis is almost never fatal. If you notice unusual behaviors or symptoms, contact your physician.

### **How can mono be prevented?**

- Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid drinking or eating from a common container, mouth-to-mouth kissing, and sharing any articles contaminated with saliva, i.e., gum, candy, pacifiers, or eating utensils.
- Make sure to cough or sneeze into a tissue and then dispose of the tissue properly into the trash can. The use of handkerchiefs is not recommended.
- Wash and disinfect toys or objects shared by young children that may become contaminated.

## **How do I get more information on mono?**

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 [www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/](https://www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: [www.cdc.gov/epstein-barr/about-mono.html](https://www.cdc.gov/epstein-barr/about-mono.html)

Spanish: [www.cdc.gov/epstein-barr/about-mono-sp.html](https://www.cdc.gov/epstein-barr/about-mono-sp.html)

*Infectious mononucleosis*

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.