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## Mononucleosis Information Sheet

### What is Mononucleosis?

Mononucleosis is an illness caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), which is a member of the herpes virus family. Mononucleosis infects the B-lymphocytes, which are a type of White Blood Cell.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms occur 4 to 6 weeks after exposure and usually include fever, sore throat, swollen glands (especially in the back of the neck), fatigue and a loss of appetite. The liver or spleen may become enlarged. Mononucleosis is more often seen in high school and college students.

Almost everyone gets mononucleosis at some point during his/her life, but not everyone shows symptoms.

### How is Mononucleosis spread?

Mononucleosis is spread from person-to-person through saliva contact. The virus can spread through kissing, sharing beverages or utensils, or touching contaminated hands or toys.

### Is there a treatment?

There is no treatment. Rest and drinking plenty of fluids is recommended. Throat lozenges may help a sore throat. Acetaminophen can be given for general discomfort or fever.

### Are there any complications?

Sometimes the spleen enlarges and is at risk of tearing. Avoid contact sports and heavy lifting to protect the spleen from rupturing. A sudden pain in the upper left abdomen could indicate that the spleen is rupturing and requires immediate medical attention.

### How is it diagnosed?

Mononucleosis is diagnosed by a blood test.

### How long does it take for a person to recover?

Recovery usually takes several weeks but may take up to 4 months. Activities such as kissing and sharing beverages should be avoided for a few weeks. Do not donate blood for 6 months. Illness that lasts more than 6 months should be investigated by a physician.

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For further information, please call:  
**York Region Health Services *Health Connection***  
**1-800-361-5653**  
[www.region.york.on.ca](http://www.region.york.on.ca)