

What is CMV (cytomegalovirus)?

CMV is similar to mononucleosis, with prolonged fever and mild hepatitis. It is a virus that is generally harmless to most people but can cause severe disease in certain individuals. CMV is a member of the herpes group of viruses.

Who is at risk for problems from CMV?

Three groups of people are at higher risk of problems from CMV:

- Babies born to women infected with CMV for the first time during pregnancy. About 7 percent to 10 percent of these babies will have symptoms at birth or will develop disabilities including mental retardation, small head size, jaundice, eye infection, hearing loss and delays in development.
- People on certain drugs or medicines such as chemotherapy or organ transplant medicines. If infected, these people may get a more serious illness.
- People who can't fight infection (those with immune deficiency diseases such as HIV or AIDS) also may develop serious illness.

What are the symptoms of CMV?

Most adults and children who catch CMV have no symptoms and are not harmed by the virus. Symptoms some people may get are fever, sore throat, fatigue and swollen glands.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Unknown. Infection usually starts three to 12 weeks after blood transfusions and between one and four months after organ transplantation.

How is CMV spread?

- Direct person-to-person contact with infected secretions and urine.
- Mother to infant before, during and following birth.
- Blood transfusions from an infected person.
- Organ or stem cell transplant.

When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?

People can spread the disease as long as the virus is in body secretions, which can be months or years. Because this virus is so common in day-care settings, excluding infected children from the day care won't reduce the spread of the disease.

How is a person diagnosed?

Laboratory tests can be ordered to diagnose CMV in a person with symptoms. Blood tests can be done to see if the person was infected with CMV in the past.

What is the treatment?

Antivirals are available, but do not eliminate CMV from the body.

Does past infection make a person immune?

No, but most people do not ever have signs or symptoms if the virus does enter their body.

Should children or others be excluded from day care, school, work or other activities if they have CMV?

No, unless the child is unable to participate in activities and staff determine that they cannot care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the other children.

What can be done to prevent the spread of CMV disease?

Wash your hands often, especially after changing diapers or coming into contact with urine.

CMV-IGIV is available for certain exposed individuals with high risk conditions such as transplant recipients, and pregnant women. High-risk individuals should contact their primary care provider if exposed.

Additional Information:

Additional information is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease or by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

Resource:

American Academy of Pediatrics. [Cytomegalovirus Infection]. In: Kimberlin DW, Brady MT, Jackson MA, Long SS, eds. *Red Book: 2015 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 30th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2015: 317-322