



Mononucleosis (Mono)

Patient and Family Education

What is mononucleosis?

Mononucleosis (mono) is caused by a virus and is often called “the kissing disease.” It can be spread not only by kissing but also from drinking fountains, glasses, sneezing and coughing. Children of all ages and adults can get mono and symptoms can last for two to three weeks. Most children with mono get a rash if they take ampicillin or amoxicillin, so these antibiotics should not be given.

What are the possible symptoms?

Your child may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever and chills
- Sore throat
- Swollen lymph glands
- Loss of appetite
- General aching and discomfort
- Stomach pain
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Confusion

What is the treatment?

Your doctor will talk with you about specific care for your child. Some general guidelines to follow include:

- Have your child get plenty of rest.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol® or other less costly store brand) or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil® or other less costly store brand) may be given for pain or fever. Follow the directions on the box carefully or ask your child’s doctor how much medicine to give.
 - Do not give your child more than 5 doses of acetaminophen in a 24-hour period.
 - Do not give acetaminophen to babies less than 3 months of age without a doctor's order.
 - Do not give ibuprofen to babies less than 6 months of age without a doctor's order.
- Offer plenty of liquids.
- Limit activity and contact sports as advised by your doctor because of risk of injury to an enlarged spleen.

Your child can return to school when his fever is gone and he can swallow normally.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child’s doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child. A Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice nurse is available 24 hours a day at 404-250-KIDS.

Mononucleosis, continued

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor if he:

- Has swollen and bleeding gums
- Has constant bad breath odor
- Has sudden or severe stomach pain or his stomach pain lasts longer than three days
- Has trouble breathing
- Cannot drink fluids or shows signs of dehydration (drying out):
 - No urine in six hours in an infant younger than 1 year old
 - No urine in more than eight hours in a child older than 1 year old
 - No tears when crying
 - Sunken eyes
 - Dry lips and mouth

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