

CHILDREN
WITH

glandular fever

(infectious mononucleosis)



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General information:

Infectious mononucleosis – also called glandular fever – is a virus infection, which particularly affects children and young people.

The condition usually lasts from 2 to 4 weeks. Glandular fever may lead to significant tiredness which may last for months after the illness is over. Children who have had glandular fever will be immune to it for the rest of their lives.

The diagnosis is based on the characteristic symptoms of the illness and blood samples.

How is it contracted?

The virus is in the child's spittle and infection takes place by being in contact with e.g. toys and other objects contaminated with spittle, or by kissing. The virus is transmitted from spittle to the mucous membrane in the mouth, from where it may be transmitted to the lymph glands, spleen and liver via the blood.

Symptoms:

- Glandular fever usually begins with influenza-like symptoms such as general discomfort, headache, aching muscles and light fever
- After a week or two, the temperature rises
- Swelling and sore throat



- Possibly breathing with a snoring sound
- White coating on the tonsils, bad breath, and hoarse voice
- Swollen and tender glands on the neck and sometimes also in the armpits and groin
- Liver and spleen are often enlarged
- Significant tiredness
- Possibly stomach ache.

Good advice:

- Offer the child plenty to drink and eat
- A sore throat may be eased by giving the child soft or liquid food and hot drinks. If necessary, you can also give painkillers as agreed with a doctor
- Swollen glands may make breathing difficult, but elevating the head may help. Put a pillow under the mattress or put a pile of books under the bed
- If the child's nose is very blocked, you may drip saline drops in the nose or use a nose spray (children's dose) – but only for a week
- Undress the child if it has a high temperature
- If the liver or spleen is affected, alcohol and hard physical activities should be avoided for about a month.

When to see a doctor?

Contact a doctor if the child:

- has difficulty breathing
- seems very weak and it is difficult for you to get in contact with the child
- refuses to drink and cannot pee
- has stomach ache
- is in severe pain
- makes you worry and you feel insecure.

Contact your general practitioner first because he/she knows your child better than the doctor on call. You can also get good advice and guidance from your health visitor.

Treatment:

Since glandular fever is a virus infection, there is no medical treatment. All you can do is relieve the symptoms.

Prevention:

Both children and adults should maintain good hand hygiene as this has been shown to reduce infection.

Childcare:

The child can return to childcare once the fever has gone and it does not need painkillers and when the worst tiredness has disappeared.

Parental guidelines

These guidelines have been prepared by a working group set up by the departments of paediatrics in Herning, Randers, Skejby and Viborg.

The intention with these guidelines is to provide parents with advice across the following sectors: health visitors, general practitioners family doctors, doctors on call, and the staff at paediatric admission wards in the Central Denmark Region.

The parental guidelines can be seen and downloaded from the internet on the web site www.fv.rm.dk

You may order additional copies from Rikke Dalsgaard,
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