

FactSheet

Para Su Información

Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

What is cytomegalovirus (CMV)?

Human CMV, a member of the herpesvirus group, is a common virus that infects most people some time during their lives, but rarely causes illness. Although it can be present in your body without causing illness, it can be reactivated and cause illness later.

Who gets CMV?

Anyone can get CMV.

How is CMV spread?

CMV is spread from person to person by contact with urine, saliva, breast milk, blood, semen, and possibly other body fluids. The virus can spread from an infected mother to her fetus or newborn baby. CMV can also be acquired by blood transfusion and organ transplants.

What are the symptoms of CMV infection?

Most children and adults infected with CMV do not have symptoms. Those who do may have fever, swollen glands, and feel tired. Immunocompromised people (such as AIDS patients or those receiving cancer treatments) may have a more serious illness such as pneumonia or inflammation of the eye. The most severe form of the disease occurs when a fetus is infected. Most of these infections are without symptoms; however, about 10% of these babies later have some type of disability such as hearing loss, learning disabilities, or mental retardation.

How soon after infection do symptoms appear?

Illness following transfusion with infected blood begins 3 to 8 weeks after the transfusion. Infections acquired during birth may occur 3 to 12 weeks after delivery. The time frame for onset of symptoms

following person-to-person transmission is unknown, since most people never become ill.

How long can an infected person carry CMV?

CMV can remain in the body throughout a person's lifetime. The virus may be found in the urine or saliva of infected people who may or may not be ill.

How is CMV diagnosed?

Diagnosis is made by various laboratory tests.

What is the treatment for CMV infections?

There is usually no treatment for CMV. However, patients with AIDS or cancer who have an eye infection may be treated with an antiviral medication.

Should an infected person be excluded from school or work?

No.

What precautions should pregnant women take?

Pregnant women should be careful to wash their hands after changing diapers or having contact with urine or saliva. Those working in child-care centers should not kiss babies or young children on the mouth. Pregnant women should ask their doctors about CMV infections.

What can be done to stop the spread of CMV?

Good handwashing is the best way to prevent infection with CMV. Health-care workers should wear disposable gloves when handling sheets or clothes soiled with feces or urine.

(continued)

Where can I get more information?

Contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District, Office of Epidemiology at (702) 759-1300.



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