



CYTOMEGALOVIRAL ILLNESS

WHAT IS CYTOMEGALOVIRUS?

CYTOMEGALOVIRUS (CMV) IS A VIRUS THAT INFECTS MOST PEOPLE AT SOME TIME DURING THEIR LIVES BUT RARELY CAUSES ILLNESS. THE VIRUS IS CARRIED BY PEOPLE AND IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD, WATER OR ANIMALS. ANYONE CAN BECOME INFECTED WITH CMV. ALMOST ALL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO CMV BY THE TIME THEY REACH ADULTHOOD. THE MOST SERIOUS RISK OF ILLNESS IS TO AN UNBORN CHILD EXPOSED TO THE VIRUS IN THE MOTHER'S WOMB.

HOW IS CYTOMEGALOVIRUS SPREAD?

ALTHOUGH THE VIRUS IS NOT HIGHLY INFECTIOUS, IT CAN BE SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON BY DIRECT CONTACT. THE VIRUS IS SHED IN THE URINE, SALIVA, SEMEN AND OTHER BODY FLUIDS. IT CAN ALSO BE SPREAD FROM AN INFECTED MOTHER TO HER FETUS OR NEWBORN, AND BY BLOOD TRANSFUSION AND ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CYTOMEGALOVIRUS INFECTION?

MOST CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO ARE INFECTED WITH CMV DO NOT DEVELOP SYMPTOMS. THOSE WHO DEVELOP SYMPTOMS MAY HAVE A FEVER, SWOLLEN GLANDS AND FEEL TIRED. PEOPLE WITH WEAK IMMUNE SYSTEMS MAY HAVE A MORE SERIOUS ILLNESS INVOLVING FEVER, PNEUMONIA AND OTHER SYMPTOMS.

HOW SOON AFTER INFECTION DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

ALTHOUGH MOST PEOPLE NEVER DEVELOP SYMPTOMS AFTER INFECTION, SYMPTOMS CAN APPEAR BETWEEN THREE TO 12 WEEKS.

HOW LONG CAN AN INFECTED PERSON CARRY CYTOMEGALOVIRUS?

ONCE INFECTED, PEOPLE HAVE THE VIRUS FOR LIFE. INFECTED PEOPLE MAY OCCASIONALLY SHED THE VIRUS IN URINE OR SALIVA, BUT THE VIRUS RAPIDLY DIES ONCE OUTSIDE THE BODY.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR CYTOMEGALOVIRUS INFECTION?

IN MOST CASES, THERE IS NO TREATMENT. CHILDREN WHO HAVE CMV CAN STILL GO TO SCHOOL.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CYTOMEGALOVIRUS?

GOOD HAND WASHING IS THE BEST WAY TO NOT GET INFECTED. PLASTIC DISPOSABLE GLOVES SHOULD BE WORN WHEN HANDLING LINEN OR UNDERCLOTHES THAT COULD BE INFECTED WITH FECES OR URINE.