

# Glandular Fever

## What is Glandular Fever?

Glandular fever (also known as 'kissing disease' or 'infectious mononucleosis') is an infection caused by a virus named Epstein Barr Virus (EBV).

Glandular fever often affects young adults. It is spread by close personal contact and saliva.

There can be a delay of 4-6 weeks between infection with the virus and the start of symptoms.

## What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms are:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Tiredness
- Enlarged, sore lymph glands in the neck and elsewhere.

In addition, you can get:

- Abdominal discomfort from an enlarged spleen
- Jaundice (yellow discolouration of the skin) from liver inflammation
- Joint pains.

Young children may not show many symptoms.

## How is it diagnosed?

Blood tests can confirm the diagnosis. A throat swab may be done to look for other causes of a sore throat.

## What is the treatment?

There is no specific treatment for glandular fever. You should rest until you feel able to resume your activities. Your GP (family doctor) may advise treatment for symptoms, such as paracetamol.

## When should I go to hospital?

For some people glandular fever can cause quite severe symptoms and you may not be able to eat and drink.

If this is the case, you may need intravenous (IV) fluids and medication to make your throat feel better to allow you to eat and drink.

Some antibiotics can cause reactions when taken and should generally be avoided. They are given only when you are quite unwell and there is a suspicion of a bacterial infection.

## What happens next?

The illness usually lasts for one to several weeks. Most people make a complete recovery, although for some people the tiredness lasts longer.

You do not need to be isolated from work/school/childcare, although you should avoid spreading the virus to others by:

- Avoiding sharing drink bottles
- Avoiding kissing others
- Washing your hands regularly.

It is possible to remain infectious (able to spread the virus) for many months or even longer.

You should avoid injury to the abdomen during the illness and for a few weeks after as the spleen (an organ in the abdomen) can be at risk of harm after the illness (e.g. from contact sport such as rugby).

