



## **CYTOMEGALOVIRUS (CMV)**

### **What is cytomegalovirus?**

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus in people of all ages. A healthy person's immune system usually keeps the virus from causing illness. In some cases, mild illness can occur.

Congenital CMV is when a baby is born with CMV infection and most never show signs or have health problems. Unfortunately, for the babies that are affected, CMV can cause serious disease or illness affecting the brain, liver, spleen, lung, and growth problems

### **Who gets CMV?**

People of all ages can get CMV. Over half of adults have been infected with CMV by age 40. Once CMV is in a person's body, it stays there for life and can reactivate. About one out of every 200 babies is born with CMV.

### **How is CMV spread?**

CMV may be passed through body fluids such as saliva, blood, urine, tears, semen, and breast milk from an infected individual. CMV can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her baby during pregnancy, through direct contact with saliva or urine, through sexual contact, and through transplanted organs and blood transfusions. CMV transmission is rare through casual contact.

### **What are the symptoms of CMV?**

Most children and adults who are infected with CMV do not develop symptoms. In common cases, infection in healthy people can cause mild illness that may include fever, sore throat, fatigue, and swollen glands. Occasionally, CMV can cause mononucleosis or hepatitis. People with weakened immune systems who get CMV can have more serious symptoms affecting the eyes, lungs, liver, esophagus, stomach, and intestines. Babies born with CMV can have hearing loss, developmental and motor delay, vision loss, microcephaly, and seizures. About 15% of babies with CMV will not have signs at birth but will later develop hearing loss. Although congenital CMV can go undetected without symptoms at birth, routine testing of newborns is not performed.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Although most people will not develop symptoms, the incubation period appears to be between three and 23 weeks.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?**

CMV is very common in childcare settings. Children with CMV infection should not be excluded because it offers no benefit and will not reduce disease transmission. Instead, quality hand hygiene should be followed.

## **What is the treatment for CMV?**

Healthy people do not usually require medical treatments. Medications are available to treat CMV infection in people who have weakened immune systems and babies. Antiviral medications may improve hearing and developmental outcomes for babies with signs of CMV at birth.

## **What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of CMV?**

Good handwashing is the best preventive measure. Reducing contact with saliva and urine from babies and young children may lessen the spread of CMV.

## **Resources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/cmV/index.html>