

## **INFECTIOUS MONONUCLEOSIS**

Infectious mononucleosis ("Mono") is a common acute infectious disease usually found in young adults between the ages of 5 and 30. It is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus.

### **Signs**

Early signs or symptoms of mono can be vague, such as headache, chills, easy fatigability, fever and sore throat. As the disease advances, its manifestations become more obvious for example, fever, feeling of extreme exhaustion, tender enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, armpits and groin. Symptoms of nausea, vomiting, decreased appetite and abdominal pain may appear. There may be yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes (jaundice). It is important to remember that you may have any or all of the above signs or symptoms.

### **Diagnosis**

Diagnosis is confirmed by a blood test referred to as the "Mono Spot" or the "heterophile" test. These tests may not be positive until several weeks after the symptoms arise and, rarely, may remain negative throughout the course of the disease.

### **Treatment**

There is no medication that can cure mono. Treatment is symptomatic and supportive since the disease is viral by nature. Medical supervision and treatment are absolutely necessary. Patients are instructed to:

1. Obtain 10-12 hours of sleep a day.
2. Avoid contact sports.
3. Avoid alcohol.
4. Increase fluids; avoid caffeine.
5. Avoid social activities; limit activities to sleeping, eating, studying and, if able, classes.
6. Remain at home if fever develops.
7. Eat a well-balanced diet.

### **Recovery**

Time of recovery varies from individual to individual, depending on the early recognition of symptoms and severity of the course of the disease. Recovery may occur in several weeks to several months. Patience is needed during the recovery stages. The acute phase generally lasts 1-2 weeks; at the end of that time normal stamina is regained to about 90%. The remaining 20% of the recovery pattern may not occur for another one to two months or longer.