



Health Corner

Infectious Mononucleosis

Fall is the season for the spread of a very common viral illness known as **Infectious Mononucleosis** ("mono" or "kissing disease") usually seen in teenagers and young adults.

What is it? - Mono is a contagious illness caused by the **Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)**. It is spread by person-to-person contact, with saliva being the primary method of transmission. Mono developed its more common name "kissing disease" from this prevalent form of transmission among teenagers. Sharing water bottles or beverages from the same container can also transfer the virus. The incubation period (time from initial infection until appearance of symptoms) is usually four to six weeks.

Symptoms include a lack of energy and tiredness, loss of appetite, fever, sore throat, and swollen neck glands. More severe symptoms can include tonsillitis, red rash, liver inflammation, and enlarged spleen. While some children infected with mono will remain asymptomatic (i.e. have no symptoms).

Diagnosis is suspected by the doctor based on the above symptoms and signs. Mono is confirmed by a blood test (mono spot), and other tests should be done to rule out strep throat infection.

Treatment for mono is **rest, rest & more rest!!** Other comfort measures, like Paracetamol, for fever and body aches can be given. Only if there is a suspected strep throat infection will antibiotics be prescribed. Mono is a self-limiting illness; however feelings of fatigue and tiredness may persist for several weeks. Vigorous contact sports should be avoided for 6 to 8 weeks (during the illness & recovery phase) to prevent rupture of the spleen.

ISL Policy

- If your child has any of the above symptoms, please consult with your local doctor. Encourage your children not to share any water bottles and beverages.
- If your child is diagnosed with mono, please notify the School Nurse. Once symptom-free, your child may then return back to school with a doctor's note.