

Fact Sheet: CMV (Cytomegalovirus)

What is Cytomegalovirus (CMV)?

CMV is a virus that only infects humans and can be found worldwide. It can remain inactive in the body for long periods of time and may become active during times of illness.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms vary depending on age and immune status of the person at the time of infection. Sometimes there are no symptoms.

Symptoms may include:

- Prolonged fever
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Vision problems
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin)

How is it spread?

CMV may be shed in body fluids (urine, saliva, blood, tears, semen, and breast milk) of an infected person. CMV is spread to other people by close intimate contact with infected body fluids; usually when infected body fluids come in contact with a person's hands and then the person puts their hands to the nose or mouth of a non-infected person. CMV is spread through sexual contact, blood transfusion, transplanted organs, and mother to infant (during pregnancy or birth or in breast milk).

How is it treated?

Currently, no treatment exists for CMV infection in the healthy person. An antiviral drug, Ganciclovir, may be given to those with vision problems or who are immune compromised.

Who is at risk?

- Daycare workers
- Children in daycare centers
- Men who have many male sex partners

How is it prevented?

The best protection against CMV is frequent hand washing with soap and water. Persons who take care of children should always wash their hands after changing diapers. Pregnant or very sick people should avoid exposure to people infected with CMV.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

