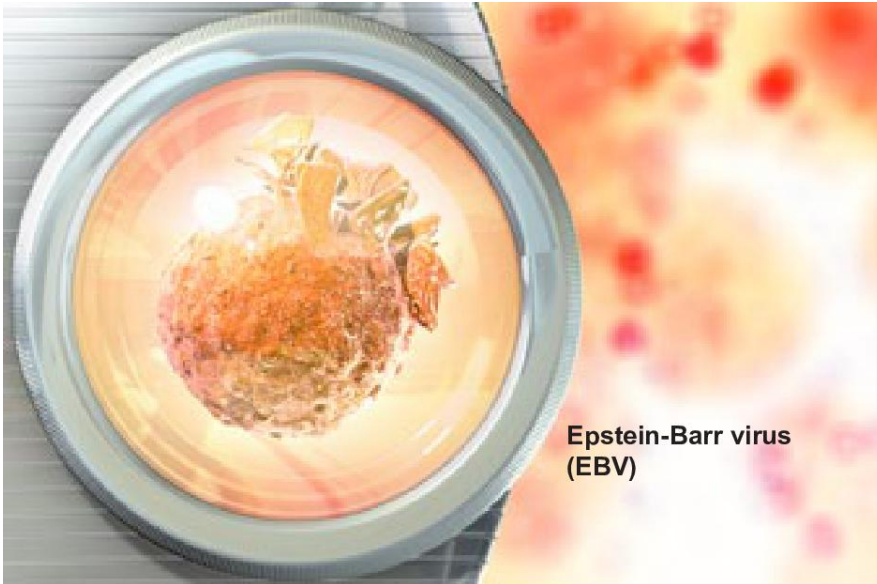




## Infectious Mononucleosis (IM; Mono)



Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)



### Overview

This common viral infection is sometimes called "the kissing disease." It can leave an infected person tired for weeks or months. Mononucleosis is most often seen in adolescents and in young adults.

### Causes

Mononucleosis is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (also known as "EBV"). This is a member of the herpes virus family. EBV can spread through saliva, mucus, and tears. Most people have been exposed to the EBV virus at some point in their lives, but many never develop symptoms of mono. A person who has been infected becomes a "carrier." The virus remains in the body permanently. It is usually dormant, but it can reactivate periodically. When this happens, although the virus may not cause the carrier to become ill, it can infect others.

### Symptoms

Symptoms of mono include fever, chills, sore throat and swollen glands. It can cause body aches, loss of appetite, and fatigue. Symptoms appear four to six weeks after exposure to the virus, and symptoms may last for one or two months. In rare cases, the spleen may become enlarged and may rupture during a bout of mono. If the spleen ruptures, the person will experience severe pain in the upper left part of the abdomen. This is an emergency. It requires immediate medical attention.

### Treatment

Most cases of mono can be treated with home care. Bed rest and plenty of fluids are recommended. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may reduce fever and relieve a sore throat. If the person experiences severe swelling of the throat and tonsils, a doctor may prescribe a corticosteroid medication to reduce the swelling.