

GLANDULAR

FEVER

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CMG Archives

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IMPORTANT

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Introduction

Glandular fever is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus. This can attack only two types of cell in the body: those in the salivary glands and white blood cells known as B lymphocytes (B-cells).

Infection begins in the salivary glands, which release large amounts of the virus into the saliva. The infection spreads to the B lymphocytes, causing them to multiply, and causing the lymph glands to swell and become painful.

Once infected, the virus remains dormant in the body's cells for the rest of a person's life.

Glandular Fever is also known as infectious mononucleosis or kissing disease (in the past it was realised that the infection was passed through saliva - for example, by kissing).

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Symptoms

The incubation period of Glandular Fever is between 33-49 days.

Symptoms include:

- Flu-like symptoms. Similar to other viral infections, Glandular Fever often causes fever (high temperatures), muscle aches, headaches and can make the individual feel quite unwell.
- Headache
- High fever - above 39 degrees C (102.2 degrees F)
- Loss of appetite

- Malaise. A feeling of intense tiredness and lack of energy often develops with glandular fever. This is often the last symptom to go
- Muscle pains
- Occasionally a fine red rash
- Sore throat (this can be severe and may be mistaken for tonsillitis)
- Swelling around eyes. Approx. 1 in 5 people with Glandular Fever become quite puffy and swollen around the eyes. This eases in a short time
- Swollen tender glands (in the neck and around the body)
- Weight loss
- Dehydration

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Diagnosis

The diagnosis may be clear from the symptoms; however, it can be confirmed by a blood test.

Because glandular fever is a viral infection, there's no specific treatment.

Pain relief and fever treatments (including paracetamol or ibuprofen).

Throat lozenges can also be taken.

Fluids and rest are very important to help overcome the infection.

Antibiotics are not needed and can trigger a rash in this condition.

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Treatment

Vit C (timed release recommended) - 500 - 1,000 mg, 3 x daily

Vit B Complex - 50 - 200 mg, 3 x daily

L-lysine (amino acid) - 1,500 mg daily

Honey - mix 2 x tbsp. honey and 2 x tbsp glycerine with a pinch of powdered ginger, or a little of the grated fresh root, and 1 x tbsp. fresh lemon juice; keep this mixture warm and take as needed to ease the sore throat.

Tissue Salts

Kali Mur - for swellings of the glands of the neck and the throat

Ferr Phos - for fever and pain in acute swelling of the glands

Dose: 4 x tabs every 2 x hours, reducing as symptoms abate. If particularly acute, increase to hourly.

Homeopathy

Belladonna - for fever and swollen glands

Ailanthus Glandulosa - has proven useful in Glandular Fever

Baryta Carbonica - of value for glandular symptoms

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Complications

Most people with glandular fever do not have complications.

If complications do occur, they may include:

- Damaged spleen - this is serious, but rare. A swollen spleen is more delicate than normal. A damaged spleen may occur if the left side of the chest or abdomen is injured. For example, after a fall. The spleen normally settles down to its normal size after about 6-8 weeks. Consequently, the individual should not play rough or contact sports such as rugby for at least eight weeks after having glandular fever.
- Jaundice. Mild inflammation of the liver sometimes occurs causing mild jaundice (yellowing of the skin). This is not serious and quickly goes.
- Malaise and depression. It is common to feel tired and low for the duration of the illness, and for a week or so afterwards. Some people develop 'post viral fatigue' for variable periods. However, this usually clears in time.
- Rash - a widespread, non-itchy, red rash occurs in some people with glandular fever. This usually fades quickly.

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