NORTH MONTEREY COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
School and Child Care Guidance for Mononucleosis

What is mononucleosis?
Mononucleosis, also called “mono” or the “kissing disease,” is a viral disease commonly spread in high school and college students. About 50% of those infected will develop symptoms of infectious mononucleosis.

What causes mononucleosis?
Most of the cases are caused by Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). However, about 5% to 7% of cases are caused by cytomegalovirus (CMV). Both are members of the herpesvirus family.

What are the symptoms of mononucleosis?
Symptoms may include fever, sore throat, swollen glands (especially behind the neck), headache, tiredness, and sometimes a rash. Mono can last up to several weeks. It may take weeks to months to regain energy; however, this will vary from person to person. Less common problems include jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes) and/or enlarged spleen or liver. Although rare, the spleen may rupture in extreme cases.

How is mononucleosis spread?
Person-to-person, mainly through saliva. However, these viruses can also spread through blood and semen during sexual contact, blood transfusions, and organ transplantations. Spread can occur by kissing or sharing items contaminated with saliva (e.g., drinking cups, straws, bottles, mouthed pens and pencils, lip balm, or toothbrushes). Since this virus does not live long on surfaces and objects, you need to be exposed to fresh saliva to become infected.

What is the time from exposure to onset of symptoms *(incubation period)*?
4 to 6 weeks

How long is an individual with mononucleosis contagious *(infectious period)*?
Prolonged and depends on the individual, from many weeks to a year or more. Some adults are long-term carriers of the virus.

When should students be excluded from school?

Child care and School: As long as the child is able to participate in routine activities, they should not be excluded. Because students/adults can have the virus without any symptoms and can be contagious for such a long time, exclusion will not prevent spread.

Sports: Contact sports should be avoided until the student is recovered fully and the spleen is no longer palpable.

How is mononucleosis diagnosed?
A healthcare provider may do blood tests.

How is mononucleosis treated?
May include bed rest, drinking plenty of water, restriction on lifting heavy objects or vigorous exercise, including contact sports.

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How do I prevent/control mononucleosis?

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after any contact with saliva or items contaminated with saliva.
- DO NOT allow sharing of drinking cups, bottles, straws, cigarettes, mouthed pens and pencils, toothbrushes, or lip balm.
- DO NOT allow sharing of water bottles during sports events.
- Avoid kissing an infected child on the lips or having contact with their saliva.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled.

When Should I report to Public Health?

Mononucleosis is not required to be reported to Public Health, but you are always welcome to contact Public Health with any questions or additional guidance requests.