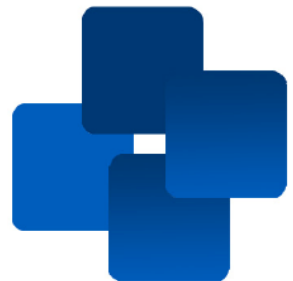


Patient Information

Glandular Fever

Ears, Nose and Throat Department



What is glandular fever?

Glandular fever is a viral illness caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), a member of the herpes family of viruses. It is most often seen in teenagers and young people.

Glandular fever is spread through saliva, therefore it can be spread through:

- Kissing (it is often referred to as the "kissing disease").
- Exposure to coughs and sneezes.
- Sharing eating and drinking utensils, such as cups, glasses and unwashed forks and spoons.
- Sharing toothbrushes.

How common is it?

The EBV infection is very common, although the majority of those with the virus will never become ill. Most EBV infections take place during early childhood and usually produce few or no symptoms. However, if an EBV infection occurs during the teenage years there is a risk that it will lead to the development of glandular fever. This is why the majority of glandular fever cases occur in people aged 15-25.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms can vary depending on the age of the person infected. The most common symptoms are:

- A high temperature (fever).
- A sore throat – this is usually more painful than any you may have had before.
- Enlarged tonsils, causing painful swallowing.
- Swollen glands in your neck and possibly in other parts of your body, such as under your armpits.
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness).

How is it diagnosed?

A blood test can be done to confirm the diagnosis.

How is it treated?

- Antibiotics have no effect on glandular fever and may cause skin rashes.
- Try to rest at home and drink plenty of fluids.
- If you are suffering from a sore throat, painkillers can be taken, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. These can be bought from pharmacies and supermarkets. Always follow the dosage instructions on the packaging.
- You should gradually increase your activities as energy levels return.

Are there any risks?

- There is a chance that your liver and spleen might be swollen after glandular fever, so it is advisable to avoid any kind of contact sports and to avoid drinking alcohol for a couple of months.
- There is a possibility that your liver function test results might come back deranged (abnormal). If this is the case, then you might need to get a repeat blood test, including liver function test, every few weeks at your GP surgery.

How can the spread of glandular fever be prevented?

Once the diagnosis of glandular fever has been made, care should be taken not to spread the infection through the saliva by avoiding the behaviors listed on the previous page.

How long does glandular fever last?

The illness usually lasts a few weeks although the glands may remain enlarged for few months. It is not unusual to feel a lack of energy for several weeks or months afterwards. However, if you are still not improving or become worse, please see your GP.

Useful Telephone Numbers

- Switchboard, Lister Hospital
☎ 01438 314333 - ask for ENT Department
- ENT Nurse Specialist (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)
☎ Mobile: 0778 534 3359 or 0787 639 0290

In an emergency, dial 999 and request an ambulance or attend your nearest Emergency Department.

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ☎ 111

Useful websites:

www.entuk.org

www.nhs.uk