



For more information about **Cytomegalovirus** contact

*The Community Infection Control Nurse at your local
Primary Care Trust (PCT)*

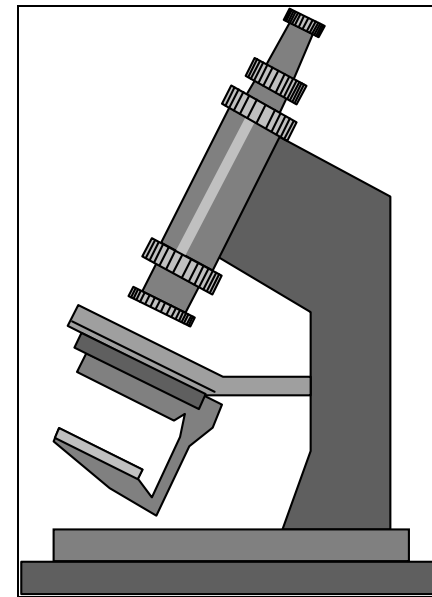
or

your local Health Protection Unit

or

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics>

HPA North West



Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

INFORMATION LEAFLET

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What is Cytomegalovirus?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a type of herpes virus, which can cause a variety of infections. It is a common virus that can infect people of all ages. Once CMV is in a person's body, it remains there for life.

Who can it affect?

ANYONE - It is a very common virus – up to half of the adult population in developed countries such as the UK have been in contact with cytomegalovirus and have immunity to it.

Most infections with CMV are 'silent' meaning that most people who are infected with CMV have no signs or symptoms, but, it can cause more serious infections in 'vulnerable groups' of people such as:

- Pregnant women
- New born and premature babies
- People with a weakened immune system

In these groups of people it can cause diseases of:

- The eye
- The liver
- The gastrointestinal system
- The nervous system
- The lungs

Is Cytomegalovirus important?

It can be for those in the 'vulnerable groups' listed above as it can be a cause of serious infection.

It may also cause harm to a developing baby in its mother's womb if the mother gets her **first** cytomegalovirus infection during her pregnancy (called congenital cytomegalovirus disease), **but**, only a minority of these infections have any adverse effects upon mother or her unborn baby.

How is it spread?

Cytomegalovirus can be passed from a mother to her baby:

- In the mother's womb
- During the birth
- By breast milk

It is also spread by intimate contact and by poor personal hygiene, between family members and close contacts.

It is also passed on from person to person by:

- Sexual transmission
- Intimate 'wet' kissing

How do you prevent it?

- By adopting good hygiene practices and always washing hands thoroughly with hot water and soap:
 - ◆ Before eating food
 - ◆ Before preparing and serving food
 - ◆ After changing a baby's nappy
 - ◆ After hands have been contaminated with any body fluid
 - ◆ After going to the toilet
- By always promptly & thoroughly cleaning surfaces contaminated by the body fluids listed below, with household cleansing agents and wearing disposable gloves if possible.
 - ◆ Urine
 - ◆ Saliva
 - ◆ Blood
 - ◆ Stool/faeces
 - ◆ Semen
- By being aware of the risks especially if you are in one of the 'vulnerable groups' and taking extra care with hygiene practices and cleaning practices.