

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Glandular fever

What is glandular fever?

Glandular fever is caused by a virus known as EPSTEIN-BARR Virus (EBV). It also is known as the 'kissing disease'. Glandular fever is common among young adults; however, it can affect any age group.

What are the symptoms?

The infection can present in several different ways. The symptoms may include:

- High fever
- Excessive fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Enlarged lymph glands in the neck, groin, and armpits
- Swollen ulcerated tonsils.

What are the risks?

A few people may have more persistent symptoms, for example, swollen tonsils (with spots of (pus or ulcers), enlarged lymph glands, and high fever, pain, severe fatigue (tiredness), and difficulty swallowing, which can lead to dehydration. It is possible to develop more serious problems from this illness, including hepatitis, unusual liver function, and an enlarged spleen which can lead to the spleen being more vulnerable to trauma.

What will happen if I am admitted to hospital?

You will be assessed in the treatment area by a doctor who will explain the reasons for your admission. The doctor will then explain the tests you will need to confirm your diagnosis, which will include a blood test (Mono Spot).

You may also have been prescribed medication in the form of tablets or an injection to reduce pain or fever. If you are unable to eat or drink, due to a severe sore throat, you may be prescribed IV (intravenous, which means into the vein) fluids to prevent you becoming dehydrated.

What treatment will I receive?

There is no specific treatment for glandular fever, however, it is recommended that you have plenty of fluids (drinks), rest, and painkillers (paracetamol), if needed. Antibiotics are sometimes given to prevent complications; some patients also need steroids to reduce swelling of their tonsils.

How long will I stay in hospital?

This will depend on your condition and your response to the treatment. Most patients remain in hospital for one or two days. This will be discussed with you by your doctor.

What should I do when I return home (and for patients who have not been hospitalised but are recovering at home)?

- Avoid alcohol. If there is any evidence of liver involvement, do not drink alcohol until your liver function blood tests return to normal. You will have repeat bloods approximately four weeks following diagnosis.
- Drink plenty of fluids and rest is encouraged during your recovery.
- Take painkillers (paracetamol) or anti-inflammatory tablets (ibuprofen).
- Avoid rough or contact sports, or any heavy lifting for at least eight weeks, because if your spleen is enlarged, this could cause damage.
- To prevent the spread of glandular fever avoid kissing or close body contact with other people whilst you are ill.

What if I have any concerns or questions about my condition?

You may experience further episodes of lethargy (tiredness or weakness); this is normal. This can last up to two months following diagnosis. However, please contact your GP if the lethargy lasts for long, or any further/unusual symptoms develop.

What about school/college/university/work?

There is no formal exclusion required for glandular fever. Return should be done at your own pace once you feel well, this may be done in gradual stages. Often people require two to four weeks away, but this is entirely individual. Speak to your GP if you require any further help with regards to this or you need a fit note.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service:

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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