

# Signs & Symptoms of Mononucleosis

By Amy Bentley



**Dr. Harvey S. Triebwasser**  
CHOC's Director of  
Adolescent Medicine

Dr. Triebwasser is a long-standing member of the Society for Adolescent Medicine and the director of adolescent medicine at CHOC. He also heads CHOC's Eating Disorder Clinic. Dr. Triebwasser completed his internship and residency at Cornell New York Hospital. He has focused his career in medicine on patient care and has traveled on medical relief missions to Haiti and Pakistan after major earthquakes devastated those countries.

Dr. Triebwasser's philosophy of care: "The most important thing to raising teenagers is love and limits."

**EDUCATION:**

State University of New York –  
Downstate School of Medicine,  
Brooklyn, NY

**BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:**

Pediatrics  
Adolescent Medicine

## About 90%

OF ADULTS WHO HAVE ANTIBODIES THAT SHOW THEY HAVE A CURRENT OR PAST EBV INFECTION

### WHAT IS MONONUCLEOSIS?

Mononucleosis (called mono for short) is an illness caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), a common virus most children get exposed to at some time. "Most people have a mild infection but some people, especially teens and young adults who become infected, develop a more serious case," says Dr. Triebwasser.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of mono may include fever; swollen lymph glands in the neck and armpits; muscle weakness and body aches; fatigue; a skin rash; a sore throat; an enlarged spleen; liver involvement that can cause temporary jaundice; and abdominal pain. "Most people come in because of the fatigue and sore throat from the tonsils getting really inflamed. Mono Tonsillitis can be confused with tonsillitis such as strep throat," says Dr. Triebwasser. He suggests it's a good idea to bring your child to the doctor for a correct diagnosis and to rule out other illnesses.



### TREATING AND PREVENTING MONO

"The treatment is rest. That's all you can do, and to avoid contact sports because the spleen may be enlarged," says Dr. Triebwasser. "The best prevention is good hygiene and frequent hand-washing. You would do the same things as you would to prevent the flu." Dr. Triebwasser noted that mono is not treated with antibiotics because it's viral.

## Up to 75%

OF MONO PATIENTS WHO TEMPORARILY HAVE AN ENLARGED SPLEEN



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For information on the expert care we provide and the health plans we accept, visit [choc.org](http://choc.org)



## At least 25%

OF TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS INFECTED WITH THE EPSTEIN-BARR VIRUS THAT WILL DEVELOP INFECTIOUS MONO

