

This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please ask either the nursing or medical staff who are providing your care and treatment or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01386 502552.

If you would like this leaflet in a different language, larger print size, in audio, Braille or any other format please contact the

PALS team by phone on

☎ 01905 760020;

by letter ✉ Communications,
Worcestershire Health and Care Trust,
2 Kings Court, Charles Hasting Way,
Worcester. WR5 1JR.
or by email ✉:

WHCNHS.communications@nhs.net



Worcestershire
Health and Care
NHS Trust



CYTOMEGALOVIRUS

What is it?

Your questions answered

**An Information Leaflet
for
Patients and Staff**

WHAT IS IT?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common viral infection throughout the world. In Europe 60% of people have had the infection by adulthood.

CMV is medically important because it can damage babies in the womb (congenital infection) and it can cause diseases in immunosuppressed people. It is also the most common cause of post-transplant infection.

Congenital infection with CMV happens sometimes when a pregnant woman is infected with CMV for the first time. As she has no immunity to the virus it can cross the placenta and infect her baby. This occurs in about 1800 babies born in England and Wales each year. Nine out of ten babies born this way will be well and healthy so CMV infection generally goes unnoticed.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT SOMEONE HAS THE INFECTION?

The diseases caused by CMV in people with impaired immunity (e.g. those with HIV or on immuno-suppressive drugs) include fevers, pneumonia, inflammation of the retina and inflammation of the liver.

IS IT INFECTIOUS?

CMV is present in the saliva, urine and blood of people who have had a recent infection. Good hygiene prevents CMV spreading in most circumstances.

IS THERE ANY TREATMENT?

There is no vaccination available but there are anti-viral drugs which can control CMV infection in people with impaired immunity, thus reducing the damage that it causes. If a woman does get CMV infection during pregnancy the infection is unlikely to be noticed and it is extremely rare that the child is harmed.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SOMEONE HAS THE ILLNESS?

Because CMV is a common virus and any infection is normally unnoticed there is no sense in applying special precautions.

- There is no period of exclusion of the infected person or contacts from school or work.
- Personal hygiene should always be observed.
- Hands should be washed with warm soapy water and dried:
 - ...after handling nappies
 - ...after using the toilet
 - ...before eating or handling food.
- Cuts on hands should be covered with a plaster.

