



Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

Information for transplant patients about a common virus

About half of all people have been exposed to the *cytomegalovirus (CMV)*. CMV is not highly contagious, but it can cause serious illness in some people. People who have had an organ transplant are at higher risk of getting sick if they are exposed to CMV.

This handout gives helpful information about CMV.

How do I get CMV?

- From close contact with people who carry the virus.
- From exchanging body fluids with someone who carries the virus. These include saliva, urine, breast milk, blood, semen, and vaginal fluids.
- Infected mothers can pass CMV to their unborn baby through the placenta.
- From blood transfusions and organ transplants if the donor was infected with CMV.

How can I have CMV in my body but not feel sick?

Your body's immune system helps fight off disease. CMV may be in your body, but your immune system stops it from being active and making you feel sick.

How do I know if I might be sick from CMV?

If you are sick with CMV, you might have some of these symptoms:

- Tiredness, with muscle pain
- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Blurry vision
- Eye pain

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Questions?

Call 206-598-4400

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

4-Southeast Transplant
Surgery/Renal
Medicine:
206-598-4400

Transplant Nurse:
206-598-4773

How can I know for sure if I have CMV?

Your doctor can do these tests to see if you have CMV:

- Blood tests and tissue samples to screen for CMV
- Chest X-ray

Why are transplant patients at higher risk of getting sick from CMV?

People who have had an organ transplant must take medicines to prevent organ rejection. These medicines also lower the ability of the immune system to fight off disease. This increases the risk of getting sick from CMV.

What can happen to a transplant patient who has CMV?

A CMV infection can:

- Shorten transplanted organ survival
- Increase the risk of acute rejection
- Increase the risk of CMV-related pneumonia, gastrointestinal (GI) disease, eye problems, or swelling in the brain

How do I keep from getting sick from CMV?

- Follow a healthy lifestyle with good nutrition, exercise, and hand hygiene.
- Take Ganciclovir, Valcyte, or other capsules if your doctor prescribes them to prevent CMV infections. You may also receive this medicine in an *intravenous* (IV) form.
 - IV Ganciclovir treatment may last for at least 3 weeks.
 - Your blood will be tested for CMV every week while you are receiving IV treatment.

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