Glandular Fever –
Advice for Young People, Parents and Carers

Children’s Services
Women & Children’s Services

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.
Introduction
The aim of this leaflet is to provide young people, parents and carers all the relevant information about Glandular Fever and answer some common concerns and questions.

What is Glandular Fever?
Glandular fever is a virus – viral illness caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) – it is a member of the herpes family of viruses, and is most often seen in teenagers and young people. Glandular fever is spread through saliva. It can be spread through:
- Kissing (it is often referred to as the "kissing disease")
- Exposure to coughs and sneezes
- Sharing eating and drinking utensils, such as cups, glasses and unwashed forks and spoons
- Sharing toothbrushes

Glandular fever has an incubation period (the time between being exposed to the virus and getting the symptoms) of between 4 and 7 weeks, therefore, you may not know the person you have kissed has glandular fever as they may not have any symptoms of the virus. Once you have been diagnosed with glandular fever you may be contagious for up to 8 weeks.

The Epstein-Barr virus can often escape the body’s natural immune response to infection and survive for long periods of time, without causing illness.

What are the Symptoms?
Many people have few or no noticeable symptoms of glandular fever. If symptoms do occur then you will feel tired and lethargic,
may be feverish and ache all over, have swollen tonsils (making it difficult to swallow) and you will have a very sore throat. You may have loss of appetite, muscle aches and a headache.

These symptoms will start out as mild for a few days before they become more severe. These more severe symptoms may last a few days or a few weeks. It may take a few months before you feel yourself again, during this time you will continue to feel tired and get exhausted easily.

Very rarely glandular fever can cause inflammation of your spleen and liver, it is therefore important that you avoid contact sports (which may cause trauma) and alcohol, which put undue stress on your liver, until you have fully recovered.

How is it diagnosed?
Glandular fever is diagnosed by a doctor he will consider your symptoms and history of possibly contact with others who have glandular fever. He may perform a simple blood test (a monospot test) to diagnose you.

There is no vaccine for glandular fever.
To help prevent the spread of the virus you should avoid kissing, and do not share crockery, clothing or towels with other people if you have recently had glandular fever.

Treatment
There is no cure for glandular fever. Treatment focuses on alleviating symptoms. When you are feeling unwell, tired or have a high temperature you should try and:
- Rest as much as possible
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially iced water and fruit juice
• Take painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, if you have a sore throat or headache.

If you find it difficult to swallow, paracetamol and ibuprofen are also available as dispersible tablets or in syrup form which you may find easier.

It is often found that taking painkillers 1/2 hr before meals will help with eating.

**Risks**

There are no long term complications from glandular fever, however you may continue to feel tired and you should ease yourself slowly back into any exercise regimes.

In rare cases when swelling in the throat is severe and interferes with swallowing, treatment with corticosteroid tablets may be used.

More serious complications include secondary infection of the brain and central nervous system and damage to the spleen – which is a life threatening emergency due to potential blood loss. If you have glandular fever and experience sudden intense abdominal pain dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.

It is very important you do not participate in any contact sports or strenuous physical activity for 8 weeks after being diagnosed with glandular fever.

**Discharge Arrangements**

No further appointments at the hospital are normally required.

However after having glandular fever, you should ease yourself slowly back into your usual exercise routine. Stress may also hinder your recovery and could present problems for students taking exams.

Excessive tiredness and stress may effect revision and even exam performance. If this applies to you may wish to consider delaying your exams or asking your doctor for a letter to present to the examination board.

Staying off school, college or work is not necessary and you can return as soon as you feel better.

**Reference Section**

MEDINFO - [www.medinfo.co.uk](http://www.medinfo.co.uk)


**Contact details for Further Information**

If you have any concerns you must seek medical advice:

- From your GP or
- By telephoning NHS 111 or [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)
- By telephoning the ward;
  - Diana Princess of Wales Hospital Rainforest Ward – (01472) 875314.
  - Scunthorpe General Hospital Disney Ward – (01724) 290139

**Concerns and Queries**

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

**For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital**
Information for patients and visitors

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.
Alternatively you can email: nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Confidentiality
Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.). Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.

Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour
The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:
- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.

Risk Management Strategy
The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

Moving & Handling
The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust
Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scartho Road
Grimsby
01472 874111

Together we care, we respect, we deliver

For more information about our Trust and the services we provide please visit our website: www.nlg.nhs.uk
Information for patients and visitors

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
01724 282282

Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue
Goole
01405 720720
www.nlg.nhs.uk

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