

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) and congenital CMV

Fact sheet for childcare providers.

What is CMV?

CMV is a common virus. Anyone, at any age, can get CMV. It doesn't usually cause symptoms in healthy people, but the virus can pass to your growing fetus if you have CMV while you are pregnant.

When a baby is born with CMV, the infection is called congenital CMV. Congenital CMV is the most common infectious cause of birth defects. About 1 out of 5 babies with congenital CMV will be born with or develop long-term health concerns, such as hearing loss, vision impairment, seizures, or developmental disabilities.

How is CMV transmitted?

CMV is spread through contact with bodily fluids like urine and saliva. It is common for young children to get CMV from other children. They can transmit the virus to parents and caregivers, even when they don't seem sick. At any given time, 30 to 40% of children ages 1 to 3 in childcare settings are excreting CMV in their saliva and urine.

Childcare providers are at an increased risk of getting CMV.

The virus can be spread during diaper changes, sharing food or utensils, kissing, and other activities where you have contact with the urine or saliva of a young child with CMV.

Should children with CMV stay home from childcare?

Children with congenital CMV or who get CMV after birth should not be expected to stay home. Children who are known to have CMV do not transmit CMV more often than any other child. Since a child with CMV may show no symptoms, childcare providers should use proper handwashing and sanitation procedures with all children.



"I truly believe that [childcare] providers should know the complications that can arise with this virus."

—Minnesota childcare provider and parent of a child with congenital CMV

Reduce your risk of getting CMV

Avoid children's saliva and urine



Wash your hands with soap and water often, especially after changing a diaper or wiping a child's nose or mouth.



Do not pass anything from a child's mouth to your mouth such as a pacifier or toothbrush.



Do not share food, drinks, utensils, or straws.



Kiss children on the forehead instead of the lips.



Disinfect toys, changing tables, and other surfaces that may have a child's urine or saliva on them.

Congenital CMV is the **most common** infectious cause of birth defects in the United States.

About **1 out of every 200** babies is born with congenital CMV in the United States.

About **1 in 5** babies with congenital CMV will be born with or develop long-term health concerns, such as hearing loss, vision impairment, seizures, or developmental disabilities.

Learn more about CMV and congenital CMV

- ♥ Talk to your health provider
- 💬 Call MDH at 651-201-3650 or email health.cyshn@state.mn.us
- ➡ View CMV resources online at health.mn.gov/cmvm



How are babies tested for congenital CMV?

Congenital CMV is most often found in babies less than 21 days old by testing a sample of their blood or urine.

In February 2023, Minnesota became the first state in the nation to screen all newborns for congenital CMV as part of the newborn screening program, so you might know of children in your care who have congenital CMV.

How can I best support parents of children with congenital CMV?

Finding out that a child has congenital CMV may cause anxiety or stress for some parents. One of the best ways to show support is to educate yourself about congenital CMV.

Also, remember that CMV is a common childhood virus and that children known to have CMV or congenital CMV should not be treated differently from other children in your care.

