

How do you catch CMV?

Person-to-person contact. CMV is spread from one person to another, usually by close and prolonged contact with bodily fluids. Bodily fluids in which CMV can be found are urine, saliva, blood, feces, tears, breast milk, semen, and cervical secretions. Several examples of how a person may catch CMV from someone shedding the virus include kissing, sexual intercourse, sharing eating and drinking utensils, and sharing mouthed toys. You *cannot* catch CMV by merely being in the same room with someone, unless bodily fluids are exchanged. Additionally, there is no information to indicate CMV is transmitted in the air.

Transplants and transfusions. CMV may be spread to organ and bone marrow transplant recipients and to patients who receive a blood transfusion from a donor with an active or past CMV infection.

Mother to newborn baby. CMV commonly is transmitted to newborns through the mother's breast milk or by contact with cervico-vaginal secretions at the time of birth. This type of transmission is a natural and usually safe way for a mother to transmit CMV to her healthy, full-term infant because the baby also has the mother's natural immunity to the virus. Premature infants may have special considerations regarding breastfeeding.

Mother to unborn baby. CMV can be transmitted to the unborn child of a mother with a primary or a recurrent CMV infection. When a baby catches CMV prior to birth it is known as a congenital CMV infection. Approximately 90 percent of all infants who are infected with CMV prior to delivery are born without symptoms of the virus; however, the remaining ten percent will have varying degrees of abnormalities.