

What happens in the body during a CMV infection?

When CMV causes an infection for the first time, it is called a primary infection. Just as with all infections, the body begins to fight CMV by producing antibodies and immune cells. While there is an active infection in the body, CMV will be excreted or shed in body fluids. After infection however, the virus remains in the body in a latent or inactive state, usually for life. CMV antibodies will be present for life as well.

Like other viruses in its family, it is possible for CMV to reactivate (act like a new infection). This type of infection is a recurrent infection and may occur at any time, but especially when the immune system becomes altered or weakened. When reactivation occurs, CMV antibody levels may increase and viral shedding may reoccur.