Glandular fever

Definition
Glandular fever (infective mononucleosis) is a viral infection commonly occurring in young people.

Causes
A virus called ‘epstein barr’ causes glandular fever. Although a lot of people catch this virus, only some of them develop glandular fever. Glandular fever often seems to develop at a time of stress, e.g., exams.

Signs and symptoms
You may get one or more of the following symptoms:
• Profuse sweating mainly at night
• Pain and difficulty on swallowing
• Severe tiredness
• Generalised aches and pains
• Swollen glands particularly under your arms, in your neck and in your groin
• Dehydration
• Secondary infection, e.g. tonsillitis.

Treatment
• You have been admitted to treat any secondary infection and help relieve the symptoms of your virus
• Treatment will be individualised and may include a drip (intravenous fluids) whilst you are unable to swallow fluids. Antibiotics will be given at first through the drip (intravenously), and then switched to oral tablet form. The nurses looking after you will regularly give you appropriate pain relief and closely monitor your condition. You will be advised to rest and as your condition improves you will be encouraged to drink and then start eating a normal diet again.
• It is routine for blood tests to be performed during your stay.
• Your stay in hospital may range from two to four days, depending upon the severity of the condition and your recovery.

Discharge advice
• Your current symptoms should resolve within a few weeks, but general tiredness may continue for several months. You will be given a course of oral antibiotics and suitable pain relief.
• The nurse will discuss with you how and when these medications should be taken.
• Glandular fever affects people for varying lengths of time. It is impossible to predict how long you may feel unwell.

If you take the following advice hopefully it will minimise the effects of your illness:
• Rest when you feel tired.
• Avoid strenuous physical activity until your symptoms have resolved.
• As glandular fever can affect both the liver and spleen, we advise you do not participate in any contact sports for six weeks.
• Avoid alcohol.
• We advise that you eat a normal healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids, as this will aid your recovery.
Your GP will be informed of your recent admission. You may wish to seek advice from your GP prior to returning to school or work.

If a sick certificate is required this can be obtained on the day of discharge. If further sick certificates, prescriptions or advice are required please see your GP.

**Contact information**

F5 ward: 023 8120 6511  
023 8120 4644

NHS 111 service: 111

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.