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# Neurological Consequences of Cytomegalovirus Infection

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

## Source

*National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Neurological Consequences of Cytomegalovirus Infection Information Page.](#)*

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a virus found throughout the world that infects between 50 to 80 percent of all adults in the United States by the age of 40. CMV is in the same family of viruses that causes cold sores (herpes simplex virus), infectious mononucleosis (Epstein-Barr virus), and chickenpox/shingles (varicella zoster virus). Most people who acquire CVM as children or adults display no signs of illness or have mild symptoms such as fever, fatigue, or tender lymph nodes. People with a compromised immune system may have more severe forms of infection involving the nervous system.

A hallmark of CMV infection is that the virus cycles through periods of dormancy and active infection during the life of the individual. Infected persons of any age periodically shed the virus in their body fluids, such as saliva, urine, blood, tears, semen, or breast milk. CMV is most commonly transmitted when infected body fluids come in contact with the mucous membranes of an uninfected person, but the virus can also pass from mother to fetus during pregnancy.