**Epstein-Barr Virus and Infectious Mononucleosis**

- **4-6 weeks incubation**
  - Epithelial cells become infected: shed virus into saliva
  - B-lymphocytes become infected: EBV binds to the C3d complement receptor

**TRANSMISSION** by oral secretions

**ACYCLOVIR prevents transmission via saliva**

**MEMORY B CELLS**: act as a reservoir of the virus

**PRESENTATION**: infants and young children:
- asymptomatic
- maybe mild pharyngitis with or without tonsillitis.

**Adolescents**:

**Prodrome**: 1-2 weeks
- Fatigue
- Malaise
- Myalgia

Then...
- Fever (low-grade, for 1st 2 weeks)
- Sore throat, + tonsil exudate
- Lymphadenopathy - tender and symmetric
- Splenomegaly during the second and third weeks.
- Rarely, a rash.

**Symptoms last 2-4 weeks**

**Lymphadenopathy**

**LAB FINDINGS**

**FBC**: mildly elevated WCCs
- differential that demonstrates greater than 50% lymphocytes,
- OR an absolute lymphocyte count greater than 4500,
- OR an elevated lymphocyte count with greater than 10% atypical lymphocytes

**LFT**: AST + ALP elevation in 90%
- Bilirubin rises in 40%

**MONOSPOT test**: the most common and specific test to confirm the diagnosis of IM.
- Tests for heterophile antibody. The monospot test is 75% sensitive and 90% specific compared with EBV-specific antibodies

**SPECIFIC ANTIBODY tests** are more expensive and time-consuming
- used for patients with suspected acute EBV infection who lack heterophile antibodies and for patients with atypical infections

**DIFFERENTIALS**:
- cytomegalovirus, (commonest)
- Toxoplasma,
- HIV,
- herpesvirus 6,
- hepatitis viruses
- rubella
- lymphoma / leukaemia
- drug hypersensitivity

**MANAGEMENT**: Rest, Analgesia, Antipyrexia.
- Avoid excess physical activity. You might rupture your bloated spleen!
- If airways get obstructed by Waldeyer’s ring of lymph nodes, use prednisolone.
- Antiviral therapy is of absolutely no use, quoth EBM

**COMPLICATIONS**:
- Splenic rupture + airway compromise is the main worry in the short term.
- Also reported: EBV meningitis, acute transverse myelitis or peripheral neuritis; hemolytic anaemia, hepatitis, glomerulonephritis, monoarthritis, pneumonia and psychosis.