



You came to the emergency department with a sore throat, fever or tiredness. The doctor thinks you have glandular fever, and you may have had a blood test to check. You are well enough to go home. This sheet explains how to recover safely.

What is it?

Glandular fever is a viral infection, most common in teenagers and young adults. It causes a sore throat, fever, swollen glands in the neck and strong tiredness. Antibiotics do not help because it is caused by a virus. Most symptoms settle in 2–4 weeks, but tiredness can last longer. The spleen, an organ in the upper left belly, can swell for a few weeks.

Looking after yourself at home

- Rest as much as you need. Slowly return to normal activities as your energy comes back.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Soft foods, cold drinks and warm salty water gargles can ease a sore throat.
- Avoid contact sports, heavy lifting and rough play for at least 4 weeks, or until your doctor says it is safe. A swollen spleen can tear.
- Do not drink alcohol while you are unwell and for a few weeks afterwards, as the illness can affect your liver.
- The virus spreads through saliva. Avoid kissing and do not share cups, cutlery or toothbrushes while you are unwell.

Medicines

- Paracetamol can help with pain and fever, unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet or your doctor's instructions.
- Ibuprofen can also help, unless your doctor told you not to. Avoid it if you have a stomach ulcer, kidney disease, some asthma, or are pregnant.
- Antibiotics are not needed. Some antibiotics, such as amoxicillin, can cause a rash with glandular fever.

Follow-up

- See your family doctor or health centre if you are not improving after 2 weeks, or if tiredness lasts more than a month.
- Ask your doctor before returning to contact sport or the gym.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Difficulty breathing, or noisy breathing
- You cannot swallow your own saliva, or you are drooling
- Sudden severe pain in the upper left side of your belly, or in the tip of your left shoulder
- You cannot drink enough and are passing very little urine
- Yellow skin or eyes, or very dark urine
- Feeling faint, confused or very drowsy



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.
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