Mononucleosis

What is mono?
Infectious mononucleosis ("mono" for short) is a viral infection that affects lymph nodes (glands).

How could I catch mono?
No one really knows how one catches mono; however, many medical authorities believe that the virus is spread by secretions from the nose and throat. Someone can have mono without knowing it, so you might come in contact with the virus without realizing it.

What are the symptoms?
Symptoms are sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, tiredness, fever, and headaches. Occasional symptoms are rash, jaundice (appearing yellow skinned), nausea, and abdominal pain. When symptoms subside, you may think you are better but the virus is still in your body and you remain contagious for some time. Associated bacterial infections can also occur, including strep throat.

How can you prevent or treat it?
- Viruses do not respond to antibiotics.
- Gargle with warm salt water (1/4 teaspoon of table salt and ½ cup warm tap water) as often as desired to soothe sore throat.
- Use lozenges or hard candy to relieve throat discomfort.
- Take Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen for fever and discomfort unless a physician advises against these medications.
- Apply warm, moist towels to neck, where swollen, as often as desired.
- Rest. Do not tire yourself unnecessarily. You do not have to stop all your normal daily routines, but be sensible.
- Avoid pressure to the abdomen. (With mono, the spleen usually becomes enlarged and can rupture, though it is rare. Also, the liver becomes temporarily inflamed.) No heavy lifting, contact sports, or vigorous sexual activity. If you develop a tender abdomen, seek medical attention.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Practice good hygiene.

When should you call the Student Health Center?
- You suspect you have mono
- Symptoms of mono persist more than two weeks
- You develop new symptoms, including vomiting
- Sore throat or swollen glands worsen
- You develop abdominal pain or jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
- You have a fever of 101° F (38.3 C) for more than two days
- Symptoms worry you or anytime you don’t know what to do

Adapted 12/2002 from University of Virginia.