

# Meningitis Information

	<b><u>Viral</u> Meningitis (usually self-limiting)</b>	<b><u>Bacterial</u> Meningitis (can be very severe e.g., seizures, coma)</b>
<b>SIGNS &amp; SYMPTOMS</b>	<p>Symptoms come on quickly within a few days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fever</li> <li>• N/V</li> <li>• headache</li> <li>• stiff neck</li> <li>• sensitivity to light</li> <li>• sleepiness/ trouble waking up from sleep</li> <li>• lack of appetite</li> <li>• Lethargy (a lack of energy/ fatigue)</li> </ul>	<p>Symptoms come on quickly within a few days (3-7 days after exposure):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fever</li> <li>• N/V</li> <li>• headache</li> <li>• stiff neck</li> <li>• sensitivity to light</li> <li>• altered mental status (confusion)</li> </ul> <p>If not treated can lead to serious complications, such as brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disabilities. Also, can induce <u>coma</u>, <u>seizures</u> and <u>death</u>.</p>
<b>Vaccination, Prevention &amp; Transmission Prevention</b>	<p><u>No vaccination</u> specifically for viral meningitis but there are vaccines for other viruses that can cause viral meningitis. One can take the following steps to help lower your chances of getting infected or spreading to other people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often with soap and water (especially after changing diapers, using the toilet, or coughing or blowing your nose).</li> <li>• Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.</li> <li>• Avoid close contact (kissing, hugging, or sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick).</li> <li>• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve, not your hands.</li> <li>• Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick).</li> <li>• Stay home when you are sick.</li> </ul> <p>Precautions: Standard</p>	<p>There are vaccines for three types of bacteria that can cause meningitis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neisseria meningitidis (meningococcus)</li> <li>• Streptococcus pneumoniae (pneumococcus)</li> <li>• Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib).</li> </ul> <p>Precautions: Droplet – but usually less contagious versus the cold.</p>
<b>Seeing the doctor</b>	<p>Initial symptoms of viral meningitis are similar to those for bacterial meningitis. However, bacterial meningitis is usually severe and can cause serious complications. It is very important to see a healthcare provider right away if you think you or your child might have meningitis; a doctor can determine if you have the disease, the type of meningitis, and the best treatment.</p>	

**Diagnosis:** Meningitis can only be diagnosed by doing specific lab tests on specimens from the sick person. Call your doctor if you think you may have meningitis only they can determine if you need treatment.

**Reference:** CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>

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Created 9/23/15