



How is Viral Meningitis diagnosed?

Early diagnosis is very important. **If symptoms occur, see a doctor immediately.** The diagnosis is usually made by growing a virus from a sample of spinal fluid. The spinal fluid is obtained by performing a spinal tap, which is a needle inserted into the lower back where spinal fluid is readily accessible.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific treatment for viral meningitis that exists at this time. Most patients completely recover on their own. Doctors will often recommend bed rest, plenty of fluids and medicine to relieve fever and headache.

How can Viral Meningitis be prevented?

- Hand washing, especially after sneezing and coughing.
- Keeping hands and objects out of your mouth.
- Disinfecting materials of infected people; bleach is a good disinfectant.
- Not eating or drinking after other people.
- Not sharing spoons, forks, drinking straws, chapsticks, lip glosses and lipsticks.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)

Local Resources

For information on Viral Meningitis visit our website at:

<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/epidemiology/>

or write:

Tulsa Health Department
Planning & Epidemiology
5051 S. 129th E. Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74134

Other Contact Information:

Phone: 918/595-4505

Fax: 918/595-4588

E-mail: epidemiology@tulsa-health.org

THD does not investigate cases of viral meningitis as it is not a reportable disease.

For more information on Viral Meningitis, visit:

- Oklahoma State Department of Health
(405) 271-4060
www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(888) 443-7232
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal_g.htm



**TULSA HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

Prepared by Planning & Epidemiology



Viral Meningitis is an illness in which there is inflammation of the tissues that cover the brain and the spinal cord. Viral Meningitis is also called aseptic meningitis and is caused by a variety of viruses. This type of meningitis is usually less severe than other types. It is also the most common type of meningitis. In the United States, there are between 25,000 and 50,000 hospitalizations due to viral meningitis each year.

TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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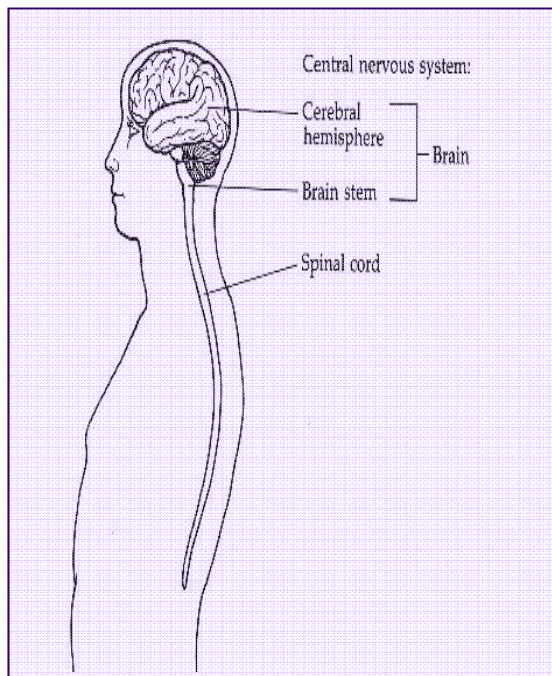


What common viruses can cause Viral Meningitis?

Many different viruses can cause viral meningitis. About 90% of viral meningitis are caused by a group of viruses known as enteroviruses.

The spinal cord and the brain

This chart illustrates the areas of the body that are often infected with viruses that cause meningitis.

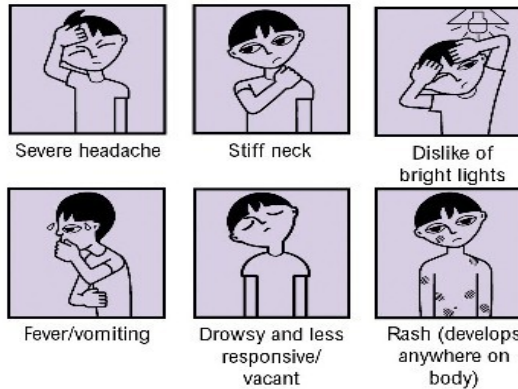


Viral Meningitis

Who is at risk for Viral Meningitis?

Anyone can get viral meningitis because the viruses that cause this disease are contagious.

What are the symptoms?



In babies, the symptoms are more difficult to identify. They may include the following:

- Difficulty awakening
- Refusing to eat
- Irritability
- Shivering
- Difficulty breathing

As this disease progresses, people of all ages may have seizures. Meningitis can be severe, resulting in brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disabilities.



How is Viral Meningitis spread?

Prolonged, direct contact with respiratory and throat secretions such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum (saliva mixed with mucus).

This usually happens by shaking hands with an infected person or touching something they have handled, and then rubbing your own nose or mouth.

The virus can also be found in the stool of an ill person. The virus is spread mainly through this route mainly among small children who are not yet toilet trained or to adults changing the diapers of an infected infant.

The incubation period for enteroviruses is usually between 3 and 7 days from the time a person is infected until symptoms are developed. An infected person can usually spread the virus to someone else beginning about 3 days after becoming infected until about 10 days after symptoms begin.



An example of the "classic" red, purple rash often indicating meningitis